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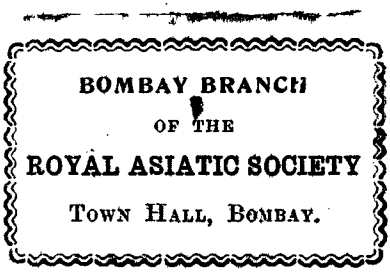

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HEATHENDOM AND CHRISTENDOM

THE VIKINGS IN WESTERN CHRISTENDOM

A.D. 789 TO A.D. 888

BY

C. F. KEARY, M.A., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

"OUTLINES OF PRIMITIVE BELIEF," "THE DAWN OF HISTORY,"

ETC., ETC

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Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto,
Ch'un marmo solo in sè non circonscriva,
Col suo soverchio.

MICHELANGELO

PREFACE.

THE present volume is concerned with that period in the history of the Scandinavian peoples when they were growing, but had not yet fully grown, into nationalities, and when, therefore, their true national history had not begun. Every historic people has passed through this early formative period, its age of *Sturm und Drang;* and it may be said that every nationality which is worthy of the name has looked back upon that age with a peculiar affection and with a sort of reverence. It has, in consequence, overlaid the faint traditions of it with a garment of mythology, out of which it is in most cases possible only here and there to separate a shred of historical truth. The result is that the very phase in the development of the people about which we most long to know, is the one about which we are condemned to the completest ignorance. The Viking Age of the Northern Folk differs from the corresponding epochs in the history of other nations in this—that it is illuminated by a faint ray of real history lent from the pages of contemporary but alien chroniclers, the chroniclers, I mean, of Christian Europe. Were it not for this faint gleam, the earliest age of the Vikings would have remained for us as a mere tradition, something known to have been, but not presentable

in any realizable form; much, in fact, what the Dorian Migration is in the history of Greece. As it is, by the aid of the contemporary records I have spoken of, we can present the northern migration in a clearer guise.

For all that, a distinction must be drawn between the earliest and, as I would call it, true Viking Age, and the actual history of the Scandinavian Folk as recorded by themselves. Viking expeditions continued to be made during the later historical period. But they took a different character from those of the earlier age, and they no longer absorbed so large a part of the activity of the people; at any rate they no longer constituted, as they do for our period, the only phase of national activity whereof the records remain. Thus, though the expression *Viking Age* is often employed with a much wider significance, it would, I think, be an advantage, could its use be confined to just this epoch in the life of the Northern people and to no other; to their age of Storm and Stress, the age of their formation.

It would be an advantage, too, if it were more generally borne in mind that the history of the North begins *now* and at no earlier time. The Vikings of this period are for us the whole Scandinavian people; we know no other—if, at any rate, we except a notice here and there of the kings of Southern Denmark. But the pre-eminence of the antiquaries of the North, overshadowing the study of Scandinavian history, has rather tended to obscure this fact. All histories (almost) of Scandinavian lands begin with prehistoric antiquities, which are not history. Or it may be that the historians of these countries have not liked to realize how far down in time their history begins; so that prehistoric discoveries or unauthenticated traditions preserved in the sagas of a later age have been brought in to fill up what is for History in the proper sense of the word a mere blank.

Such, then, is the interest attaching to the age of the Vikings from the point of view of Scandinavian history. But its records are so shadowy that it would not be possible to

claim for it a very large amount of attention upon that score alone. For universal history—or say for the history of Europe generally—it has a much deeper interest, as one phase, and a very important one, of the long struggle between Christianity and the Heathenism of the North. And it is under this aspect that the history is treated in the present volume. Otherwise there would be no adequate excuse for the three chapters with which the volume opens, nor for the one with which it concludes. These four chapters are not, strictly speaking, concerned with the Vikings; but they are concerned very intimately with the relations of Heathenism—that is to say Teutonic Heathenism—to Christianity and to Christian Europe. It has always been the intention, or at any rate the hope, of the present writer to carry on the study of this epoch one stage further; namely, to the formation and to the early history of the Scandinavian conquests and colonies in France, in the British Isles, in the islands of the North Atlantic; and, as a *pendant* to this external history, to the rise of the Edda and Saga literature and of the mythology which they enshrine—the last articulate voice of Teutonic Heathenism. If such an enlarged study were ever completed, then the three opening chapters of this volume would serve as an introduction to the whole, and the concluding chapter as a link between this volume and the next. The half-title, too, 'Heathendom and Christendom,' would stand not for this volume only, but for any—one or more—succeeding one likewise.

I may, perhaps, be allowed to add that, to the best of my recollection, this book was begun in the earlier part of 1882; that its undertaking was due, more than anything else, to the publication of the first two volumes of Professor Steenstrup's important work, *Normannerne*, to which I am glad to confess my many obligations; and that *a* volume (not identical with the present one) was ready for publication in 1887. But as, precisely at that moment, there appeared the announcement of a work by Mr. Du Chaillu upon a similar subject, publi-

cation was deferred until I could discover how far the book thus announced covered the ground over which I had travelled. The title which Mr. Du Chaillu chose for his book is the one which I had till then fixed upon for mine. But except in this one particular I was glad to find that the subject matter of the two books lay wholly apart.

C. F. K.

200, CROMWELL ROAD, LONDON.
November, 1890.

T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 9, line 31, *for* Decumati Agres *read* Decumates Agri.
,, 39, *between* lines 7 and 8 *insert* III.
,, 182, line 24 and margin *for* A.D. 852 *read* A.D. 851.
,, 190, ,, 5 ,, ,, ,, A.D. 812 ,, A.D. 810.
,, ,, ,, 6 *for* two *read* four.
,, 269, *between* lines 12 and 13 *insert* II.

CHAPTER I.

HEATHENDOM.

I.

THERE are few physical features in our Europe to-day more impressive than the remains of those Roman roads which once traversed every land owning the Roman sway, and which have withstood so wonderfully the wear of time. In every western country of Europe traces of these roads are to be found still recognizable, though in most they have been absorbed into a more modern system. Such has been the case with us as in France. But still the ancient highways can be well made out—our Watling Street, Fosse Way, Icknield Street, Ermine Street. In many parts of Spain these Roman roads remain untouched, but grass-grown and half-ruined, while beside them run the mule-paths, which are all that the indolent country now cares to keep in repair and use. Each one of these roads is a natural symbol of the state which brought it into existence, in its directness of purpose, its unswerving determination and contempt of obstacles, and likewise in a certain prosaic plainness. Yet we cannot call these roads prosaic in the sum, so inimitable are they in their vast, undaunted length, and even in the uniformity of their plan. Standing upon them you realize better

than in any other way the long arm of Roman justice. If you put your ear to them, and the cloud-gates of Time will roll aside for a moment for you, you may still hear along all their length the tramp of legionaries, the challenges of the guard, the hurrying feet of merchants or of slaves; and you will reflect, with pleasure or the reverse of it according to your bent, how these were once the iron girdles which bound together all the members of a mighty empire in an unchanging rule of justice and of law.

From Italy into France these roads made their way by the Riviera, or by the valleys of the two Doras (Durias), by Mont Genèvre to Briançon, or by the Little St. Bernard; and either way at last to Lyons, which was the heart of all the Roman rule in Gaul. From Lyons again they led on by Chalons, Auxerre, Troyes, the other Chalons, to Rheims; from Rheims by Amiens to Boulogne; and then with but a narrow strip of intervening sea to Lymne, or Dover, or Richborough, or Ramsgate;[1] thence to Canterbury. When there they turned into that greatest of our highways, Watling Street, as the English came to call it; for it had its counterpart in the great highway which runs through the heavens. Watling Street leads on through London to Wroxeter; thence to Chester; and from near Chester the Roman road runs due north past Man*chester* as far as *Car*lisle, that is to say, as far as Hadrian's wall. On the east side there is a corresponding road which runs past Lincoln to the ford across the Humber, to many other chesters in the north, Bin*chester*, Lan*chester*, Eb*chester*, and *Chester* le Street (the Castrum on the Roman road), up likewise to Hadrian's wall and beyond it.

Across the Pyrenees and into Spain these roads penetrated on either side where the great mountain range dips down to the sea; on the east from Narbonne to Figuéras, from Figuéras to Gerona; on the west from Bayonne to St. Jean de Luz and Tolosa. There was likewise on this west side another way from Dax, north of Bayonne, almost due south, through a pass in the Pyrenees to Pampeluna. The pass thus formed became in later years very famous as the pass of Roncesvalles.

[1] *Cf.* Map in *Archæologia*, 2nd Series, vol. i. (1888).

Once beyond the Pyrenees the Roman roads spread out a network over all the Spanish peninsula.

Through the Eastern Alps, too, the roads made their way, over the Brenner and over the Splügen and down the Swiss valley of the Rhine. Ammianus Marcellinus, describing the dark, swampy, and forbidding character of this last region—the approach to Lake Constance—adds that nevertheless 'the Romans, with their usual good sense, have made a good road thither'[1]—that is, to Brigantia, or Bregenz. East of the Upper Rhine and south of the Upper Danube, at Ulm, at Regensburg, these roads are still to be found. But as we travel northward the Rhine more and more becomes the dividing line between Rome and not-Rome, and you come to the true German Germany (*deutsches Deutschland*), a region into which the Romans looked, and in which their armies marched and countermarched, but which never bent to their imperial sway.

Those who are all for classing us with the rest of the Teutonic nationalities cannot get over the existence of these Roman roads in England, and all that they imply. These roads were the veins along which flowed into Western Europe, first, the laws and customs of Rome, afterwards its religion, though this last probably never reached the extremities. It was vigorous in Gaul Proper, where all national life centred around the great altar of Rome and Augustus at Lyons; but it was weak by comparison in the German provinces (Germania Superior, Germania Inferior[2]), and in Britain. When the religion of Rome changed from Paganism to Christianity, Christianity in its turn travelled by the same routes, but made its way further than Paganism had ever done.

It was only for a short time that Britain was cut off from connection with the Continent. When the great age of *Sturm und Drang*—the age of what are called the Folk-wanderings (*Völkerwanderungen*), and of the fall of Rome—had passed,

[1] Ammian. Marcel. xv. 4. 3.

[2] These two provinces were both on the west side of the Rhine. They were, however, much less Romanized than those provinces further south which lay north or east of the Upper Rhine and south of the Danube (Rhætia, Noricum).

these shores were again brought into connection with Gaul, were once more visited by Gaulish vessels and Gaul by English. Only in the interval both lands had been overrun by a Teutonic conqueror. Gaul was on the highway to change into Francia—France; and Britain was becoming, or had become, England.

Only a short time did the interruption of intercourse between Britain and the Continent endure. But still there was an interruption; and it so happens that the mythology of that interval has left us a precious relic which typifies what in the eyes of men who still made part of the 'world' of the Roman Empire was the condition of those who had been separated from it. The relic I speak of is the myth current among the fishermen of Northern Gaul touching the mysterious island 'Brittia'; a place as they deemed to which souls were wafted after death, where, as Claudian thought,[1] Ulysses had invoked the shades from Hades and poured blood into his trench—

> Est locus, extremum pandit qua Gallia littus,
> Oceani prætentus aquis, ubi fertur Ulixes
> Sanguine libato populum movisse silentem,
> Illic umbrarum tenui stridore volantum
> Flebilis auditur questus. Simulacra coloni
> Pallida defunctasque vident migrare figuras.

The same myth, as Procopius relates it in prose, is of an island, 'Brittia,' half of which was a habitation for the living, but the other half was set apart to be the home of ghosts. Between the two regions stretched a *wall* which none could pass and live; whoever did cross it instantly fell dead upon the other side, so pestilential was the air. But serpents and all venomous things dwelt on the other side, and there the air was dark and spirit-haunted. The fishermen upon the Gaulish coast were made the ferrymen of the dead, and on account of this strange duty, we are assured, they were exempt from the ordinary incidence of taxation. Their task fell upon them in rotation;

[1] *In Rufin.* i. 123-8. The place which Claudian chooses is the edge of Gaul *opposite* Britain. But Procopius' story shows that the myth belonged to our island.

those villagers whose turn had come were awakened at dead of night by a gentle tap upon the door, and a whispering breath calling them to the beach. There lay their boats, empty to all appearance, and yet weighed down as if by a heavy load. Pushing off, the fishermen performed in one night a voyage which else they could hardly accomplish, rowing and sailing, in six days and nights. When they had arrived at the unknown coast, they heard names called over and voices answering as if by rotation, while they felt their vessels gradually growing light; at last when all the souls had landed the boats were wafted back to the habitable world.[1]

This description has often been quoted before. The great value for our purpose of this piece of mythology lies in its boldly attaching itself—or with the faintest disguise—to a land formerly so well known as Britain was to the Romans—Britain, the birth-place of Constantine. The shores about which the Gaulish fishermen themselves entertained so strange a belief, whither they imagined that some of their villagers were set apart to ferry the dead, must have been the shores of Britain known to them; and therefore in the popular mythology of our near neighbours our island must have been altogether a home of the dead.[2] And something of this superstition long attached to us—the land of the Angli was in later centuries confused with the home of the Angeli.[3] If, however, we limit ourselves strictly to the myth as given by Procopius, it is only the country beyond the wall, *i.e.*, the Roman Wall, that has so ghastly a reputation. Granting, I mean, that this wild myth concerning 'Brittia' could never have sprung up save when our island and our Roman roads were cut off from the great system of Europe; still it was not so wild as quite to forget the difference between conquered Britain and those unknown unconquered regions in the far north. It was at the *wall* where the Roman roads came to an end, that all that was natural and human too, ended, and we approached the borders of the Earth. This region beyond the

[1] *Bell. Goth.* iv. 20. [2] As the passage of Claudian likewise suggests.
[3] Dudo, *De mor. et act. prim. duc. Normanniæ*, ii. 5.

wall is that same Caledonia which one of its own chieftains was made by Tacitus to speak of as the end of all territories and of all freedom.

Such was, I deem, the attitude in which the Roman subject stood—not to all the rest of the world—but to those parts of Northern Europe which lay outside the domains of Rome. To the commoner people, at any rate, all those regions were strange, misformed, monstrous, inhuman, ghostlike. And when Christianity walked along the paths which had been prepared for her by Rome, Christendom, too, looked upon this part of the unchristian world in the same way. In time, as Christianity cast her net over many people beyond the Roman pale, they began to look with her eyes, and to regard as she did their unconverted brethren. That feeling has been crystallized and preserved (by chance partly, no doubt) in our word, *heathen*, the German *Heide*, from *heath*, *Heide*. Partly by chance, because *heath* at one time might mean an enclosure in the country, *heathen* be no more than a translation of the Latin *paganus*, villager. But the earliest signification of *heath* was very soon forgotten, and the word very soon came to mean what it means with us, a moor, a wild, *uncouth*, uncultivated region, remote from human kind. The associations in popular imagination with all such places were necessarily far more terrible than they are with us: what was unknown was always then *uncouth*, that is to say, monstrous, terrifying.

The German races, though they were, as compared to the classical peoples, essentially rustics, had in their minds as vivid a picture of the horror of deserted regions as any that speaks in classical poetry. Side by side with that myth of the Gauls about Britain, side by side with the above-quoted passage from Claudian, or even with the more awful *νεκυία* of the Odyssey which suggested it, we might place some pictures drawn from our earliest poem *Beowulf*, of that arch-heathen Grendel, and of the land in which he dwelt. I call him an arch-heathen, for he is the embodiment of all terrors attaching to the moors and misty fells, the marshes and the dark peat-pools, to whatever, in fact, lay far-off from human dwellings.

He himself is a ghoul or a giant, a giant just of the same kind as the giant of our folk-tales; only that unfortunately we cannot realize what likeness such beings put on in days when men really believed in their existence. There is a giant in the Edda called Hræsvelg, Corpse-devourer: Grendel, too, feeds on human flesh; he lives far from mankind in the dwellings of the Fifel-race; but at night he stalks along under the misty hills, till he comes to men's habitations, where he can find some food for his cannibal mouth,

> Came from the moor, under the misty hills,
> Grendel stalking. . . .

He bare 'God's anger on him,' so writes our poet, a Christian telling a heathen legend.[1]

We have, then, in *Beowulf*, and its picture of Grendel, the due counterpart of Procopius' imagery. *That* stands to us for the type of a place cut off from intercourse with Rome, a heathendom before Christianity, we might say; *this* stands to us for any place cut off from intercourse with humankind, and in a spiritual sense it typifies the idea of heathendom generally, as the descendants of the heathens themselves conceived it.

The Goths had another myth which illustrates the same thought. It is reported by the Christian Goth Jordanes—in days when the Gothic nation had all been Christianized—and relates to those beings of fear, the heathen Huns. Jordanes tells us that a former king of the Goths had banished from his dominions all the sorceresses,[2] that these had gone eastward and found a home in a certain wood.[3] There they cohabited with the wild beasts of the forest, and out of this unnatural connection sprang the obscene race of the Huns.[4]

In every legend such as this the feeling which underlies it is the same; it is the horror which mankind universally conceives

[1] Compare the epithets *hraundrengr*, *hraunbúi*, frequently applied to giants in the Edda (as in *Haustlöng*, *Hymiskviða*, &c.), also *bergbúi*, *hellisbúi*.

[2] 'Haliorunas.'

[3] This wood is the *Járnviðr* (Iron wood) of the Eddas. *Cf.* Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, p. 151.

[4] Jordanes, *De Goth. Orig.* c. 24.

of all that is mysterious and unknown. The description in *Beowulf* might have been written with equal force if the poem had been a purely heathen one; and the story which Jordanes retails may very well have had its origin in heathen days. It is only that Christendom adopted this strain of popular superstition and applied it to the part of the world to which it was specially applicable—that is to say, the heathen north. It would have been absurd to speak of the classical *pagans* in such a manner. No one could think of the descendants of Pericles, or the possessors of the primeval wisdom of the East as a wild, half-human people, haunting the ways of wolves. Thus heathen, when we apply the word to the unconverted northern nations, Germans or Scandinavians, has a meaning quite distinct from that of pagan, as the word was used in the early days of Christianity. And as paganism was pretty well disposed of before Christianity came in contact with heathenism, and Christianity itself had changed in the interval, the attitude of Heathendom and Christendom face to face with one another is a thing to be studied in and by itself, not confounded in one long history of the spread of Christianity over Europe.

No time would be wasted which should help us to gain that sense of the unknown in *space* which our forefathers could possess, but which is so strange to modern thought. In vain the philosopher tells us that our life is hemmed round with mystery; it is the physical expression of this mystery that we require, in order to realize the ideas of former ages on this matter. To think that *nothing known* lies beyond such a wood, that that far headland bounds the world of men; could that be possible to us in the present day, then we might have some conception of what heathen and its cognate words would mean to a Christian of the early Middle Ages. And we should through this knowledge also be half-way towards an understanding of the conflict which had to go on in the heathen German's own soul before he could bring himself to cast out his early gods to wander through such desolate places; as Odin (Wuotan) and his following were cast out to become fiends, the Wild Huntsman and his crew; or as the same god was

left alone upon the Harz transformed into the Prince of Darkness.

Such a conflict went on in each mind; and the *epos* of this mental struggle is typefied by the *epos* of visible warfare between Heathendom and Christendom, whereof again the battles and sieges of the first Viking Age (our more special study in this volume) form in the mass a single act. The details of this warfare are often very difficult to ascertain, and seem commonplace and uninteresting. But the conflict as a whole in its inward and outward phases was stupendous, and stupendous in its results.

II.

We have been in a position to see how there was, in a certain sense, a heathendom before Christianity. Every northern country which was cut off from connection with Rome (as Britannia was for a time) sank at once into this tenebrous condition. And all those lands whither the Roman roads had never reached and the Roman rule had never spread, dwelt in it perpetually. Such a land was Caledonia beyond the wall; such was Ierne, 'gelid Ierne,' as a Roman poet miscalls the land of warm mists and rains, a land which Agricola *thought* of conquering, but where, in fact, the Roman arms had never been seen. But the true home of this heathenism before Christianity (as of the heathenism after Christianity) lay not in these western extremities of the world, but in the eastern ones, in all the great German Germany beyond the Rhine, and in the Baltic countries of which the Romans had so faint a notion.

There was a Roman Germany. First, those provinces south of the Danube whereof we have spoken, Rhætia, Noricum—now, roughly speaking, Würtemburg, Bavaria, Carinthia, German Austria, Styria. There were the Decumati Agres (the 'Tithe Lands'), which correspond with the modern Grand Duchy of Baden, and a small part of Würtemberg. In that region there was another wall of Hadrian, a *vallum* protected by a series of forts which ran due west from Albensberg on the Danube

(a little above Regensburg), and was joined eventually by the wall of Trajan, running due north beyond the Main to the slopes of the Taunus. At this last range of mountains, for all the land east of the Rhine, begins unconquered Germany. You may stand to-day and look across towards those Taunus hills from Mainz or Worms, across that great plain which was once the Rhine's bed, and which since history dawned has been the battlefield of so many nationalities and so many creeds; while a clear, star-lit sky is over your head you will see, maybe, as I have seen, over there the flashes of sheet-lightning and hear the faint echoes of thunder. The sight of these hills, the roll of that thunder, cannot be without a deep significance for any traveller whose mind is in the least degree imbued with the lessons of history. The hills are for him a symbol of the beginning of the reign of Thorr and Odin. Of deeper significance still perhaps is another mountain range which lies farther to the north and to the east. This is the Harz, which gave, I suppose, its name to the Cherusci, the great champions of heathendom before Christianity. And we know what a reputation the Harz preserved all through the Middle Ages as the hearth on which smouldered the last embers of heathenism after Christianity as it died away in witchcraft.

West of the Rhine lay two Roman Germanias, Germania Superior and Germania Inferior, the precursors of Alsace and Lorraine, that is to say, of Alsace and the greater Lorraine of early Middle Age history. To protect this Roman Germany were built the great camps or founded the great cities and colonies which lay along the banks of the stream or a little way behind it. There was Trèves (Augusta Treverorum) the most important of all. There was Castra Vetera on the Rhine itself, the chief of the Roman camps, but one of the few places which did not preserve its importance into Christian days; there was Colonia Ubiorum, or Colonia Agrippina, what we call Cologne; Moguntiacum (Mainz); Argentoratum (Strassburg); Vangiones (Worms), 'celebrated,' a Roman historian complacently says, 'for many a defeat of the barbarians'—there is no need to enumerate them all. Truth to tell, almost

all the picturesque medieval towns which the traveller of to-day knows (knows and loves) along the banks of the Rhine, Bonn, Remagen, Andernach, Oberwesel, Coblentz, and the rest[1] have had a Roman origin. In Christian days the greater of these military strongholds grew to be likewise strongholds of the faith, archbishops' and bishops' sees; the three greatest archbishoprics of Germany, the three great spiritual electorates, Trèves, Cologne, and Mainz, were all in this region of Roman Germania. Over against these strongholds stood in imperial days the wild forest haunts of the Germans, the Taunus or the Teutoberger Wald, places which were pregnant with great events.

There is one other river of Germany, one other river in Europe only, one may say, which has been fortified as a rampart against heathendom much as the Rhine has been. This river is the Vistula. Along all its banks which are German you find the fortified towns or convent fortresses, raised in the thirteenth century by the Teutonic knights as a bulwark, not now against heathen Germans, but against heathen Slavs. Marienburg, Marienwerder, Graudentz, Culm, Thorn, are the counterparts of Colonia Agrippina, Bonna, Confluentes, Moguntiacum, Argentoratum, and the rest. Only there is this difference, that whereas the greater number of the Roman forts upon the Rhine which Christendom inherited are upon the west bank, the fortresses of the Vistula stood within the heathen territory and defended the river already won by Christendom.

Beyond the boundaries, as we have traced them, of Roman empire you came to that land which the historian spoke of, n words which have been quoted a thousand times, as *in universum*, on the whole, either rugged with forest or dank with marshes, where people did not dwell together in towns, *nostro more*, but apart and scattered. Many centuries later it was said of the territory of the Saxons (between the Lower Rhine and the Elbe) that there a squirrel might travel for leagues ('seven leagues') without ever having need to touch the ground. These dark and trackless forests had a terror

[1] Bonna (Ara Ubiorum), Rigomagus, Antunacum, Vosavia, Confluentes.

of their own. Two things, says a recent writer,[1] were, during their efforts to conquer Germany, strange and terrible to the Roman generals and the Roman legionaries—the Ocean with its tides and the endless stretches of dark woodland in the interior. Upon the one the ships were suddenly, as if by unseen hands, dragged from their moorings, hurried away, and tossed upon some rocky shore. In the other, as the legions were painfully struggling through the dense forest, not less suddenly, and again at the touch of unseen, but not superhuman, hands, the trees would begin falling to right and left and rear of the army, a network of fallen trees. They had been half felled through days before in anticipation of the advance. As the Romans pressed forward they were suddenly brought face to face with a huge abatis—*broti* it was called in Northern warfare. Behind it the enemy were entrenched; arrows and javelins began to fly out from behind the improvised stockade; the *broti* stretched great wings far into the forest; if this were carried by assault you came upon another and another, and the enemy scarcely visible all the while. Meantime other trees had been falling, falling, and fresh abatis had been growing up on other sides and to the rear to cut off all retreat. He was a lucky or a very skilful general who could bring his army out thence unbroken. Perhaps he had been wise enough to post supports to come up at the critical moment; if they could reach him, he was saved; if they failed to reach him he was destroyed. This is how Cæsar was saved the day he overcame the Nervii,[2] and this is how Varus was destroyed.

Another favourite method of defence among the Germans

[1] Vigfusson, *Grimm Centenary*, ii.

[2] Not of course that the land of the Nervii lay in that special region of 'heathen' Germany of which we are speaking, for their territory was by the Scheldt. But they were a German people, and, like their brethren to the east and north, made use of something like *brotis* in their battles—only that their stockades were more like hedges and made of smaller trees. 'Nervii . . . teneris arboribus incisis atque inflexis, crebris in latitudinem ramis et rubis sentibusque interjectis, effecerant ut instar muri hæ sepes munimenta præberent, quò non modo intrari sed ne perspici quidem posset.' And later, 'Sepibus densissimis, ut ante demonstravimus,

was by means of trenches.[1] Sometimes they were mere traps into which an advancing line might precipitate itself; sometimes they concealed an ambush. Add to these terrors the wild and fearful howling, more like that of beasts than of men,[2] which echoed and re-echoed in the forest wilderness, and we have a picture of some of the physical terrors which dogged the advance of the Romans into this ancient land.

But we should, I think, be estimating very wrongly if, because these difficulties were never overcome, we were to assume that they were insurmountable, or that they were felt to be so by the Romans either of Augustus' or of Tacitus's day. A few chance sayings of the Roman historians have been exaggerated by our vanity as Teutons and made to receive this interpretation. It is rather the opposite of this feeling which we have to try and realize. It is not easy for us who have been made wise by the event to understand how low a place the nations of Northern Europe held then in the estimation of civilized mankind. Our thoughts are naturally turned to the future, but theirs were necessarily concerned only with the past, that is to say, with the remains of Alexander's Empire in the south and east, with the vast field of Hellenistic culture in Asia and Africa. 'Who,' as Tacitus says, 'would ever leave Asia and Africa for those inclement Northern lands?' The Romans had few thoughts to spare for the people whose small, one-roomed, wooden huts lay scattered among the German forests, or for those wilder people still, perhaps, of Caledonia and Ierne. India was far more interesting to them than heathen Germany or the flat lands at the mouth of the Rhine. The way Tacitus speaks of even the Gauls is very much the way *we* speak of the Hindus, or, at any rate, of the Mohammedans of India—as of a people who, no doubt, once were powerful, but whose day is over,

interjectis, prospectus impediretur; neque certa subsidia conlocari, neque quaque parte opus esset provideri,' &c. *Bell. Gall.* ii. 17, 22. *Cf.* Tacitus, *Annal.* i. 63; Ammian. xvi. 11, 8; xvii. 1, 9; 10, 6.

[1] See Ammian. xvi. 12, 27; xvii. 1, 8, 9.

[2] Plutarch, *Marius* 16, for the Cimbri and Teutones. *Cf.* Tacitus, *Annal.* i. 65, &c.

and who are now sunk irretrievably in idleness and effeminacy The same historian tells us how little the rebellion of Civilis—which arose on the Batavian island, and nearly lost to Rome Northern Gaul and the province of Germania Inferior—was noticed amid the excitement of civil dissensions in Italy.[1] It would be no unjust comparison to liken that rebellion to an abortive Indian mutiny, had such an one been set on foot by Sikhs and Nepaulese. Agricola's campaigns in Britain we might compare to the taking of Scinde. By such comparisons only can we arrive at some notion of the relation in which Rome stood to her northern subjects and neighbours.

Germany again—unconquered Germany, the Germany of Tacitus—we must compare to Afghanistan, and the great defeat of Varus to the destruction of General Sale's force in the Kyber. The circumstances of the two defeats were not dissimilar, and their consequences were almost identical. Each begot in the mind of the greater nation something of a superstitious fear, an almost superstitious exaggeration of the dangers which lay in wait for the invader. The policy of Augustus that the Rhine should form the boundary of the Roman Empire was identical with our dominant policy in respect to Afghanistan, with no more and no less of reason for the one course than for the other. The forest warfare of Germany was difficult, as we have said; the woods, the *brotis*, the swampy ground, lay in wait for the legions and auxiliaries, as the Kyber or the Bolan lay in wait for our men. But I do not think it can be seriously maintained that in the one case or in the other there was anything like an insuperable difficulty in the way of conquest. It was not a reasonable, but far more a superstitious, fear which held back the Roman arms.

Drusus seemed born to play the part of Clive to this unconquered world. He made a fleet to sail upon the German Ocean,[2] the first that ever dared its fitful tides. But,

[1] *Historia*, lib. iv.

[2] 'Usque ad obis extremum,' Augustus says in his proclamation. Pliny says he went to the extremity of the Cimbric Chersonese *H. N.* ii. 67; but this is improbable; *cf.* Bunbury, *Anc. Geog.* ii. 190.

alas, this fleet was destroyed by the treacherous ebb and flood: Germanicus suffered a like misadventure. During the commands of Drusus and Tiberius in Germany the Roman ramparts extended some way beyond the Rhine. Aliso, a strong fort on the Lippe (near the modern Paderborn), seemed to cover all the country between the Rhine and the Ems. Drusus cut a canal, navigable by his fleet, from the former river, through Friesland, to the ocean. Tiberius crossed the Weser and advanced as far as the Elbe. But after the 'Great Defeat' of Varus, Augustus undid their work and commanded the Rhine to flow as the boundary of the empire.

It may have been a sound policy[1] or it may have been a political superstition that governed the emperor's decision in this case; but it was not any pressing danger, nor even any insuperable difficulty in the way of a conquest of Germany.

In the popular mind, for the common soldier or for the chance merchant adventuring into these territories, there would mingle, I doubt not, an element of superstition not political, connected with this land of enchantments. There the divine power dwelt unseen in the midst of awful groves; the women of this race were wonderfully given to the study of magic and enchantments. Is it not rather strange that the only pure relics of heathen Germany which have come down to us are in the form of two incantations?[2] As the camp story went, when Drusus had made his march over the Weser, and threatened the Elbe, one of these wise women, these Völvas, cast her spells upon him; as a gigantic female figure—the figure of *Germania* personified—she appeared to him in a dream and warned him to turn back. He did so; but still fate overtook him; he had a fall from his horse and died within the year. And almost from that time forward the empire of Rome beyond the Rhine began to shrink. It reached the limits of its flood when Tiberius in his fleet sailed to the mouth of the Elbe and there joined hands with an army which had marched thither overland, and awed the Germans upon the other bank so that

[1] Mommsen, *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, trans., i. 54. *Cf.* Tacitus, *Annal.* i. 11.

[2] See Chapter XVI.; and *cf. Germ.* 10.

they dared not attack.[1] It then began to ebb. As Tacitus writes: 'The Elbe which formerly we knew, we now know by report only.'

We have already seen how some four centuries later the flood of empire ebbed from Britain, and ghosts and the creatures of popular superstition came in to occupy its room.

III.

In the region beyond the Elbe, where the Romans never set foot, we might expect to lie the very strongholds of what I have called pre-Christian heathendom, the ancient beliefs of Germany which knew no touch of foreign influence. There the great confederation of the Suevi stretched from the shores of the Baltic down almost to the border of the Roman provinces in Southern Germany. It is from among the Suevi of Northern Germany[2] that come the few and slight pictures which Tacitus is able to draw for us of the religion of Germany in his day. Somewhere between the Elbe and the Oder, in the territory of the Suevian Semnones—maybe on the site of the Spreewald, where there survives to-day a people who seem to belong to a bygone heathen past—stood that grove, the most sacred in all Germany, where it was believed that the great god of the Teutonic nations had been born. This great god is without question the Wuotan or Odin of later times, a divinity who,

[1] Twenty years, A.U.C. 742–762, we may reckon the duration of this extended Roman Empire in Northern Germany, of which Aliso was the capital. See Mommsen, *Provinces*, i. 367.

[2] The earliest distinction among the nationalities of Teutonic origin was probably between those of the Eastern Baltic and of the great sandy plain of North Germany and the Germans of the west—the Harz, the Thuringian, and Teutoberger Forests, &c.—who came into contact more or less with Rome. The Scandinavians, if we are to judge by early Runic inscriptions, were closely allied in language to the Germans of the Vistula (Goths). On the other hand, craniologically the Danes are very different from the Swedes and Norsemen. Judging by place-names we should say that the whole of Roman Germany was originally Celtic, and even a large part of Germany which was never Roman. *Harz*, for example, is probably a Celtic word. It is obvious, therefore, that the Suevic confederation comprehended many people not ethnologically very nearly allied.

whether or not he were the actual personification of the wind, had all the character of a god of tempests. To him alone among the German gods were *human* sacrifices offered. Tacitus tells us that they were offered in this grove. It was so holy a place that none might enter it but with a chain round his neck to show his subjection to the divinity. If a man fell down while in the wood he might not raise himself or be raised up again; he must crawl out on hands and knees.

Another picture still more impressive belongs to some of the Suevi farther to the north, whose territory lay upon the shore of the Baltic—very likely to the modern Mecklenburg and to the island of Rügen. This picture is of the worship of the chief female divinity, as the other of the chief male; her name was Nerthus or Mother Earth. *Her* home was in an island of the Baltic by the side of a lake surrounded by a wood. Every year she was brought out of this secret place, ferried over to the mainland, and there in a car drawn by white oxen she made her progress through the territories of her worshippers. None saw her face; her car was shrouded by rich tapestries, and none but her priest might approach it. The picture is almost like that of the Ark of the Lord when it was brought out to the armies of Israel.[1] But there is this difference in the two pictures—that whereas the latter came forth as an ensign of war, Nerthus, wherever she travelled, was an emissary of peace.

'Happy is the place, joyful the day which is honoured by the entertainment of such a guest. No wars can go on, no arms are borne, the sword rests in its scabbard. This peace and rest continue till the priest takes back the goddess, satiate of converse with mortals.' Yet even in this picture of primitive and simple rustic rites there lingered a something terrible. When the goddess returned to her island, the 'chariot, the veil, and if you like to believe it, the goddess herself, are washed in a secret lake by slaves who immediately after are themselves drowned therein. Hence comes a mysterious

[1] It is also like that of the *carpentum* as used in the later ritual of Ancient Rome, but which had no place in the primitive ritual.

horror and a holy ignorance of what has taken place, for that is beheld only by men who are themselves immediately to perish.'[1]

Of the northern parts of Germany, Tacitus can tell us little more than is contained in these two fragments of its creed. We have just the names of some of the people who dwelt east of the Suevi along the southern shore of the Baltic; of these the Guttones, dwelling by the mouth of the Vistula, were, we may believe, the fathers of the famous Goths, and the most nearly allied of all the *German* nations to the Scandinavians of later history. In truth, along all this northern stretch of Germany, from the Weser to the Vistula, we should find in these early days the people who effected most towards the carving out of Mediæval Europe from the remains of the Roman Empire; the Lombards between the Weser and the Elbe, the Saxons at the foot of the Cimbric Chersonese; the Angli north of them, in Jutland along with the Jutes; the Burgundians, not close to the Baltic shore, but in Poland, Prussian and Russian, east of the Vistula; and finally the Goths (we may believe) in East Prussia. The Franks alone among the greater Teuton races are wanting from this category. And the Franks, if they were really none other than the ancient Sigambri, belonged to a similar and neighbouring region, the flat country of the Lower Rhine. When we first catch sight of them they are settled in the island of Batavia, the low island at the mouth of the Rhine and Saal, whence their name Salic Franks.[2] To Tacitus and the Romans of his day these nations, all but the Sigambri, were little more than names. Some of them, he tells us, were conspicuous for their loyalty to their kings—the Western Germans being more independent and republican.

Finally, we come to the Baltic itself, which the Romans heard

[1] Tacitus, *Germ.* 40.

[2] Those higher up the river, the Ripuarian or river-bank Franks, were in the ancient land of the Sigambri. Nevertheless the Franks are not to be classed with the Low German stock which is the most closely allied to the Gothic, nor yet with the true High German Alamanni and Bavarians, but with Thuringians (Hermun-*duri*) as *Middle* German.

of only as a part of the Northern Ocean. And beyond the Baltic Tacitus affords us one slight peep into the Scandinavian countries—a mere glance, but one not wanting in impressiveness. On the other side of that sea, he says, lies the island of the Suiones, a land rich in arms and ships and men; and beyond the Suiones' land another sea, 'sluggish and almost stagnant, which we may believe girdles and encloses the whole world. For here the light of the setting sun lingers on till sunrise bright enough to dim the light of the stars. More than that, it is asserted that the sound of his rising is to be heard, and the forms of the gods and the glory round his head may be seen. *Only thus far, and here rumour seems truth, does the world extend.*'

The Cimbric Chersonèse (Denmark), moreover, the Latin writers frequently confounded with the Homeric land of the Cimmerians at the edge of the world. Here, then, we come to the true counterparts of the lands upon the other side of the North Sea, which were the end of all land and of all liberty. And if the importance of these distant territories was small in the eyes of the Romans, we must own that to the imagination of those days an interest attached to them which it is no longer possible for us to attribute to any country. It is impossible for us to read without a strange emotion the passages which speak of lands like these supposed to lie upon the very borders of the earth. *Illic usque tantum Natura* ('Here nature ends'). It is a tremendous phrase.

The Scandinavian 'island' which the ancients knew, and which they called sometimes Scanzia, sometimes Scandia [1] or Scania, sometimes Scandinavia, did not signify the whole of the Scandinavian peninsula, but probably only that lower bulge of Sweden, part of which still bears one of these names, Scania, Skåne; while another name has been extended to include a vast stretch of territory, of whose existence the Romans had no idea.

[1] Ptolemy has four islands of Scandia, one large and three very small—the Danish islands, or possibly Sweden, Bornholm, Öland, and Gottland, if we suppose the region approached from the Vistula.

This original Scandinavia (Skåne, Halland, Småland), with Jutland and the Danish islands, belongs to the low-lying deeply-wooded region of the Baltic shores far more than to upland Sweden and Norway, the lands farther to the north, which fall away from the great backbone of Scandinavia. The traveller of to-day, who passes along the well-known canal route from Götenborg to Stockholm—the most familiar of northern highways—passes not far from the dividing line, between the Baltic Lowlands and Scandinavia Proper. Geologically speaking, it is but a day or two since all was dry land, where now lies the bed of the Baltic;[1] only since the territory which should unite the Baltic shores sank beneath the waves, the forests of pine and birch have, over a great part of the remaining dry land, given place to forests of hard-wood trees, chiefly beech. A poet, a Hans Andersen, might speak of the buried lands still weeping to rejoin their brethren who feel the upper air, and sending up through the water golden tears, that amber, namely, which is such a noted product of the Baltic, and has brought it so large a share of whatever wealth it at any time has gained.

Amber and furs were the staple of such trade as existed between the Baltic lands and Rome. The Swedes are described by a writer of late Roman days as great hunters of the animals valued for their fur, 'whose skins,' says our author, 'find their way *through countless hands* to Rome.' It is said that a certain knight of Nero's day was the first Roman who ever looked upon the Baltic. He was a civil, peaceable knight, engaged in the amber trade.[2] But we ought not to omit to say that, according to one theory, there was in much

[1] In Skåne the fossil remains of many animals are found, which must have migrated thither from the *south*, and therefore over what is now the bed of the Baltic. Skåne was, in the Stone and Bronze Ages, much more thickly inhabited than any other part of Scandinavia, while the country north of the Dal-Elf was almost uninhabited.

[2] Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvii. 11. *Cf.* Bunbury, *Anc. Geog.* i. 595. Ukert *Geog. der. G. u. R.* I. ii. 307, III. i. 89, ii. 5. On the traces of a trade route down the Vistula to the Baltic, and hence to Sweden, especially to islands of Gottland and Öland, see O. Montelius, *Civilization of Sweden in Heathen Times* (tr. of *Sueriges Forntid*), pp. 98, 99.

earlier times a Greek trade to the Baltic lands, travelling by a more easterly route. This, mounting the Borysthenes (Dnieper), might navigate to no great distance from the sources either of the Dwina or the Vistula, and then descending these streams, might debouch into the Baltic. We are not without evidence in support of this theory; and it is quite possible that to this early Greek trade, rather than to the Roman, the Baltic nations were indebted for the most priceless of all gifts, the gift of letters.[1]

IV.

Out of the vast ocean which covers three quarters of our globe there are three portions connected in a special degree with the history of the world. The first is the Mediterranean, on which the light of history first shines, and round which almost all the peoples of the ancient world were grouped—Egyptians, Phœnicians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians. Very striking is it to see the dawn of history breaking over that sea, in Egypt first, then over the Eastern shores, passing westward to Greece and Italy and the Mediterranean coasts of Gaul, and on to Spain. The third of these ocean regions is the Atlantic, which, as we know, through the lands to which it leads the way, has redressed the balance of the Old World. But the middle region is certainly the Baltic, which is a sort of antithesis of the Mediterranean. The western portion of the Baltic, dotted over with its countless isles, which seem to invite men to the art of seafaring, is as a Northern Ægean or ant-Ægean:[2] for as the Ægean was the first sea in which true history begins, so the Baltic is the last almost of European seas to which that light has reached. We, Angles and Saxons, and

[1] Taylor, *Hist. of Alphabet* and *Greeks and Goths;* on the other side see L. Wimmer in *Aarbog for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1874. Müllenhoff (*Deutsche Alterthumskunde*, i. 213-217), says that the Greeks certainly did *not* get their amber from this sea. (It is well known there are, further, some difficulties attaching to the translation of the word ἤλεκτρον, at any rate before the time of Plato.)

[2] Compare Munch's remarks on the *Austrvegr* in *Norske Fks. Hist.* i. 286.

even the Lombards and Burgundians, may look upon ourselves as belonging to this Baltic region, as well as the Goths, and the Scandinavian nations proper. For there is no natural boundary separating the different peoples of the great northern plain. Not so the Hoch Deutsch people who were so long in contact with Roman civilization, and have in their veins so large an infusion of Roman blood, whose country, too, is utterly different in character from the sandy plain of the north.[1]

We imagine the Scandinavian lands proper as desolate beyond almost all other lands of Europe in this remote past. And yet Tacitus speaks of them as rich in arms and ships and men. With regard to the ships there is no doubt he is right. There must have existed in the Baltic countries from most antique days, certainly for as much as five hundred years before Tacitus's day an art of ship-building. For on certain stone carvings—*hållristingar*, hill-carvings, as they are called—found in Sweden and in Denmark, we have pictures of ships; and the pictures here presented must date from at least half a millenium before Tacitus wrote.[2] The boats there shown, as far as we can judge of them, nearly answer to the descriptions by Tacitus of the boats in use on the Baltic in his day; and curiously enough they correspond very closely to the build of boats in use among the Vikings many centuries later. Only that Tacitus tells us one fact, which distinguishes in a marked degree the Scandinavian ships of his age from the Viking ships—namely, that they had no sails. Of the Viking ships we will speak again at the proper place.

[1] Many changes of population (and still more of the names of the population) took place between the Roman possession of Rhætia and Noricum and the tithe lands, and the re-appearance of these districts after the Frankish conquests as the lands of the Alamanni and Bajuvarians (Baioarians, Bavarians). We may, however, consider these true Hoch Deutsch peoples as more deeply affected by contact with Rome than any other part of the German race. The history of these peoples is almost a blank between the time of their incorporation or semi-incorporation into the Frankish kingdom at the end of the fifth century, and of the labours among them of Boniface, at the beginning of the eighth century.

[2] Montelius, *Civilization of Sweden* (Wood), pp. 73–5.

That the Baltic countries were once rich in arms we might judge from the remains of the Bronze Age in these countries. For in no other part of Europe do we find such beautiful bronze weapons as in Denmark and South Sweden—unless it be in those prehistoric cities and treasure-houses of the Greek race, which recent excavations have brought to light—the excavations at Ilium, I mean, or Tiryns.[1]

In these two particulars, therefore, Tacitus's almost solitary item of information about the Scandinavian lands seems confirmed. The third statement, that they were rich in men, is the hardest to give credence to. Yet one fact, at any rate, may be alleged in support of it: among those powerful German nationalities which became the overthrowers of the Roman Empire, the greater number kept the tradition of a migration by their forefathers from the Scandinavian peninsula to the mainland of Europe. The Goths had this belief. We know how they and the Gepidæ were supposed to have come over in three keels (Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ), to the mouth of the Vistula—those three keels which unfortunately figure in many a Teutonic migration myth, our own among the number. The Lombards, too, believed that they had come from Scandinavia.[2] Jordanes had the same belief as Tacitus about the prolificness of the Scandinavian land. He calls it (the 'island' of Scanzia) 'the workshop of races,' *officina gentium sive vagina nationum.* All this points to a common belief in the teeming soil of Scandinavia, which Tacitus only retails.

That the belief was founded on fact I do not mean to maintain.[3] It may have had its rise in mythology. There may

[1] The likeness between the Scandinavian bronzes and these pre-Hellenic ones has been noticed. It is difficult to say what conclusions, if any, are to be drawn from this fact, *cf. Aarbog for Nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1882, p. 279 *sqq.* (S. Müller).

[2] These names do not nearly exhaust the list of Teutonic nationalities, whose traditions pointed to a Scandinavian origin. Penka (*Herkunft der Arier, p.* 142) gives an exhaustive list of them. It includes the names of the Goths, Gepidæ, Heruli, Lombards, Angli and Saxones, Franks, Burgundians, Vandals, &c. Some nations, *e.g.*, the Cimbri and Teutones, can only be traced as far back as to the Cimbric Chersonese. The Danes, on their side, probably migrated to Denmark from the south of Sweden.

[3] See below, p. 27, note [2].

have been some peculiar sacredness attaching to the Scandinavian 'island,' or some special myth connected with it, which made it the origin of the first human pair, in the same sense that that sacred grove of the Semnones was the birthplace of Wuotan. Old Teutonic belief related how three of the great gods, walking through the world, had found two trees or two logs of wood, ash and elm, and out of these had created the first human pair.[1] If that was supposed to have happened in Scanzia, this myth would be enough to make Scanzia the *officina gentium* of later tradition, and enough to hand on to Tacitus a history of the number of nations who had proceeded thence. For I think that the traditions just related of the origins of the Goths and the Lombards, and so forth, instead of precisely confirming Tacitus' statement, only account for it.

At the head, or near the head, of many Teutonic genealogies we find the name of a mythic being called Sceáf,[2] Skef—which is Sheaf. And the fragments of myth obtainable about Sceáf show him to have been a half-divine being, a demi-god or lesser god, to whom was entrusted a mission not unlike the mission given to Triptolemus by Demeter, the duty of scattering abroad among mankind the seeds of a higher culture. In the myth of Sceáf a ship takes the place of the serpent-chariot of Triptolemus. At the dawn of the world's history this divine child was wafted in a boat to the coast of Scandinavia or Denmark. He was found sleeping with his head upon a sheaf (whence his name, say the myths, speaking obviously in a late Euhemeristic fashion), and the boat, too, was full of weapons till then unknown to mankind. According to a recent writer on Teutonic mythology, this Sceáf is identical with a certain Norse god, Heimdal, who was himself one of the creators of the human race.[3] This last identification is of secondary importance here.

[1] *Völuspá*, 17, 18 (*Corp. Poet. Boreale*).

[2] *Sax. Chr.* s.a. 855. Three MSS. make Sceáf the ancestor of the West Saxon kings. MS. A has Sceldwa (= Danish, Skyld). *Beówulf* makes the miraculous child, Scyld, son of Sceáf.

[3] Rydberg, *Teut. Myth.* 87–9, 90–3, &c. I have not space, unfortunately, even in an appendix, to follow out the ramifications of the Skef-Skyld myths and genealogies.

Sceáf lived to be a very old man, and reigned peaceably in the land of his adoption. Under him mankind entered upon a new and higher life. When very old he was carried down and placed once more in the boat which had borne him to those shores, 'by no less gifts accompanied than when a child he had come thither,' men knew not whence. This is what our poem *Beówulf* tells us of his end.[1]

I trust I shall not be accused of extravagance if I surmise in this history of Sceáf some reminiscence of a culture brought to the Baltic from Greece or from Rome in prehistoric ages. It may be that some new kind of corn was introduced into the north then; it is far from improbable that the ships which made their way down the Vistula to the Baltic were the first ships—as distinguished from rude canoes—which ever plied in that sea. And the unmistakable resemblance between some of the prehistoric bronze weapons of Greece and the Bronze Age weapons of Scandinavia might suggest that these weapons were those on which the Sheaf was sleeping when he came to the far north.[2]

Or, to put the matter more plainly, suppose Greek wanderers to have come northward to see what they could pick up in the way of trade. Suppose them to have brought with them a sheaf or sheaves of corn never seen in those parts before, and along with them weapons of new kinds; how easily might this history turn into the legend of the mysterious being Sceáf carried in a boat, sleeping upon his arms.

I do not mean that the Triptolemus myth was necessarily carried north. In fact, I scarcely think that that could have been the case. For how would the dragon-drawn chariot have been converted into a ship? Yet even this is possible; it is just possible that the Dragon-ship had its origin in the ship of Sceáf. The boats of the *hällristningar* are shaped like the Viking ships. They have the same long curved stems and stern-posts which seemed to invite the boat builders of the

[1] *I.e.*, of Scyld's end. See previous note.

[2] See, however, above p. 23, note [1].

Viking days to carve them into the likeness of a dragon or *worm*.[1]

This, I know, is mere speculation. What remains is this myth of Sceáf—the boat-borne, the father of men (Heimdal?), or at the least the father of a new civilization. His myth, his worship, if he ever were actually a god, cannot be unconnected with the worship of the Demeter of the North, the Earth Mother who was brought from some island of the Baltic to be borne around among her worshippers in Germany. And there is, I think, enough in this myth—taken in connection with Tacitus's account of Nerthus—to explain the belief current among so many of the great Teutonic nations that they had sprung from Scandinavia.[2]

This belief, whatever its origin, gives, it will be acknowledged a special interest to the Scandinavian countries, even from the days when we first catch sight of them. Long before their inhabitants actually come into the field as the last champions of heathendom, they stand at the background of the nearer Teutons; a dark and mysterious background, giving, if I may say so, a sort of religious sanction to their existence. The Teutons did not really all spring from Scandinavia. But they thought they had done so; they thought they had come from the borders of that sluggish sea which girdled and enclosed the whole earth. In some way that we cannot quite understand this belief was founded upon their religious creed.

Once more, considering the matter in another light, we may divide the German races into four divisions. We begin with

[1] The word *Draki* (Dragon) our drake in 'fire-drake' was especially used in the north in connection with ships (see Vigfusson's Dict. s.v. *Draki*). It is extremely antique in spite of its undoubted foreign origin from *draco* or δράχων.

The *hållristningar* ships are, moreover, even more like Greek or Roman galleys than the later ships of which remains are found in Scandinavia. They are, many of them, for instance, furnished with *rams*.

[2] I will remark further that there appears, generally, to have been something sacred about an island in the eyes of the Scandinavians: that *peace-steads* were frequently made on islands; that the sacred character of the island was the origin of the *holm-gang*, and of the exceptionally numerous treasures found upon some of the Scandinavian islands, *e.g.*, on Bornholm, Öland, and Gottland.

those people of the south and the people west of the Rhine who were absorbed into the Roman Empire, or came into peaceable contact with it and accepted much of its civilization. We come next to the people east of the Rhine, the nations of the Taunus, of the Teutoberger Wald and the Harz, who resisted the advance of the Roman arms and robbed Rome of her conquests.[1] Then we come to the people of the vast sandy plains south of the Baltic, who, next after the Franks, were foremost in the great era of invasion, when Germany was aggressive and no longer on the defensive merely. Finally, we reach the Scandinavian lands from which came the second great army of conquest by heathendom over Christendom.

All four sections were of essentially the same race; indeed that division of speech out of which the present various branches of the Teutonic family are formed (the *Lautverschiebung* as the grammarians call it) only began to take place about the Christian era. We cannot doubt that the fundamental creed of all these people was likewise essentially the same for all. What was this fundamental creed or, at any rate, what the distinctive features of it? is a question which interests us particularly. For the battle between Heathendom and Christendom was waged in all ways and with all manner of weapons, material and spiritual.[2]

[1] These would be chiefly the ancestors, at any rate the forerunners, of the Thuringians, the Franks, and the Hessians (Chatti). The last were included in the Frankish nationality.

[2] In regard to the supposed Scandinavian origin of the Teutonic nations, to which reference has been made above, we ought not to leave out of account the new theory of Aryan origins which has been developed with much learning and ingenuity by Dr. Poesche, and by Dr. K. Penka in his two books, *Origines Ariacæ*, and *Die Herkunft der Arier* (1886). (Though one title reads like a translation of the other, they are two separate works.) According to this theory, not the German races alone, but the whole Aryan stock has had its origin on the Scandinavian peninsula. It is impossible here to discuss that theory at length, or even to explain its provisions. It is not quite correct to say that Dr. Penka supposes the whole Aryan stock to have migrated from the extreme north. The Indo-European race itself, he supposes to be a mixed one, half Scandinavian and dolichocephalous, half Turanian and brachycephalous, whose amalgamation dates from very remote prehistoric times; but he suggests that the language of the Aryans originally belonged to the dolichocephalous fair race of the Scandinavian

peninsula. The race is supposed to have come into existence under sub-glacial conditions, to which its fair type is due, and at the termination of the glacial era to have migrated northward, in order to keep to a climate more congenial to its physique. In Scandinavia alone, it is said, have we, in the kitchen-middens, human remains which bridge over the gap between the palæolithic and neolithic eras. The theory is ingenious; I do not profess to be able to gauge its probability. But there are very obvious difficulties in the way of its acceptance; and among those who are not specialists or who do not (as Mr. Freeman has happily said) think it is the height of learning to accept the last new German book, it will probably wait some time for acceptance.

It is scarcely, I presume, necessary to point out to the reader that this theory has, no more than any of the observations made on p. 21, above, concerning the essential unity of the nationalities of the Baltic shores and of the northern plains of Germany, nothing to do with the theories put forward in Mr. Du Chaillu's recent work, and implied in the title: *The Viking Age; the Early History, Manners, and Customs of the Ancestors of the English-speaking Nations.*

CHAPTER II.

THE CREED OF HEATHEN GERMANY.

I.

CHRISTIANITY passed through three stages on her road to the conquest of Europe. From being an offshoot of Judaism, she became the religion of the 'Gentiles,' that is to say, of the peoples formed mainly by Græco-Roman culture: then she extended her empire over the heathens. The second stage alone of these three is clearly illuminated for us. Of the Christian community—Christian Church if you like to call it so—while it was still Judaïc under the presidency of Peter and James, of its quarrels with Pauline Christianity, we get a hint only, no clear idea. But of the acts of Paul and his writings, of the acts and writings of the succeeding 'fathers,' all drawn from the Græco-Roman world, we have abundant remains. On entering the third stage darkness again falls round us. We have in reality but a very slight and fragmentary history of the contests between Christianity and heathenism, of the failures and successes of the forgotten army of missionaries who went out to convert the Teutonic races. And we are without that which alone could give full meaning to such accounts as we possess, a picture of the creed on which Christianity made war.

Were it only possible to recover in their entirety the beliefs of our heathen forefathers! But this is for ever impossible. We

must content ourselves with stray glimpses of it; some (very slight ones) in the pages of classical writers; some others recovered from the recorded creed of one branch of the Teutonic nation in a later age. This creed, though it is so much later in date, must preserve some elements of great antiquity. In addition we know, and it is a great thing to know, the character of the land in which the ancient Germans lived; and we know something of the life they lived there in ancient days, before the spirit of movement had begun to breathe through all the German races, and to inaugurate that epoch of Wandering which preluded the fall of Rome.

At the present day if we wish to find a country, a district, wrapped round in a garment of myth; if we wish to see landscapes, churches, old manor-houses, an ancient tree, a solitary mere, touched and gilded by that *Aberglaube* which is, as Goethe says, the poetry of life, we shall not turn to the busy changing inhabitants of the neighbouring town, who have heard and forgotten a hundred tales of wonder; but to the people of the nearest villages, who have lived in them from father to son, who have treasured up with much slower apprehension, but far more faithful memories, the mythology of the place, until it has grown into their lives and formed—

eine Kette
Der tiefsten Wirkung.

For a like reason it cannot have been in the power either of the Germans of the early Wanderings, or of those northern pirates, part of whose history is our special concern here, to have invented the essential beliefs of Teutonism. They were, in truth, things incapable of *invention* by any one, as we understand that word; but beliefs which grew up by a natural process out of the ancestral life of the Teutons and all its surroundings.

However much the stand-point of those who looked from outside into the heathen lands may have differed from the stand-point of the inhabitants, the character of the countries themselves remained the same for both. It was accident and the popular superstition of the Gauls which converted Cale-

donia into a land of ghosts. But for all that Caledonia was then what it still is, stern and wild, girt by the melancholy ocean, and for all that men could know in those days, at the outer extremity of the whole world. So with Germany —or the Germanies, including the Scandinavian lands— Tacitus's description, 'dank and gloomy,' applied to them all. His picture of the Germans dwelling apart 'by stream, or grove, or plot of open ground,' might serve best for the Germans near the Rhine or in the broken country eastward as far as the Thuringian forest and the Harz. But the vast unfruitful plains of North Germany compelled men to live apart for the sake of sustenance. There was less of choice here, but more of necessity.

All these lands must have been densely wooded. The entire country known to the Romans certainly was so. In the centre and south lay the boundless Hercynian forest, which stretched beyond the regions where even stray merchants and travellers had penetrated. It threw out a wing northward to include the Teutoberger forest, Varus's fatal wood, the Thuringian forest, and the Cheruscan Harz (*Mons Melibœcus*), a wing south-west to take in the present Black Forest, the *Silva Marciana* of Roman days. Without doubt the plains immediately to the south of the Baltic were not less thickly overshadowed by primeval woods. The Cimbric Chersonese was densely covered. Centuries later the coasts alone of the Scandinavian countries were inhabited or tilled. Munch [1] draws a fine picture of the Scandinavian peninsula in prehistoric days, submerged under its thick black forests as under some huge black sea, out of which the bare hill-tops rose like islands, and on these hill-tops the nomadic Finns, or Lapps, the only inhabitants of the interior in those times, pastured, as the Lapps of the north do to-day, their cattle and reindeer. Such is his picture, needing modification, perhaps, in the last touch,[2] but

[1] *Det Norske Folks Historie*, beginning.

[2] It seems pretty certain that the Finns and Lapps have not reached Scandinavia by migrating northwards as was once supposed, but from the north. That they ever reached further than half way down the Scandinavian peninsula is not proved.

none in its essential features. The early Norse sagas tell us of this or that hero who penetrated into the peninsula and created for himself, as it were, a new country, a new world, by felling a clearing in the primeval forest. Such an one was Anleifr Trételgja, Olaf Tree-feller, who is spoken of in the *Ynglinga*.[1] He is half mythical; but he or his antitype must have lived ages after Tacitus wrote what he wrote of the forests of Germany.

We know, too, something of the way of life among these ancient Germans. They lived apart; but yet their scattered houses formed a group which we in these days should call a village. Yet we must not picture to ourselves the English village, with its two rows of houses close side by side and 'dressed,' like two ranks of soldiers facing inwards, on the long village street. Even to-day in Germany you may find an arrangement far more primitive than this—houses scattered in so far that they face all ways, and the high-road loses itself among the multiplicity of paths between them.[2] In Sweden and Norway, wherever there is room enough, we see something resembling much more the primitive village of the Teutons, houses dotted about far apart over a considerable plain. To-day this area is generally a clearing. But forest villages are still to be found. In these one house can often see none of its neighbours; each one has its own small patch of cultivated ground.

Among the various households of the village the land was distributed in such a manner that we may divide its portions into three—the allotment, the farm, and the common. Some people will have it that the principles of land tenure too resolved themselves into three—private, communal, and common: meaning by communal land that held by the community as a whole, and not in private ownership, and redistributed each year, or at stated times, by authority of the village council—council of eldermen, aldermen, or whatever it might

[1] *Ynglinga Saga* 46 (Heimskr.). The Danes in England, we know, earned the name of 'tree-fellers.'

[2] Villages of this description are specially characteristic of the Rhine country. See R. Henning, *Das Deutsche Haus*, p. 22.

be called. This theory of the farm land held as communal land is at the least doubtful.[1] But what is not doubtful is that beside the private allotment belonging to each house or household, beside the portion of farm-land which was held by each household but not held under quite so 'good' a title, there was the large district of common, or rough pasture, as it was sometimes called, in which no individual rights existed. In countries where the squirrel could travel for leagues without touching the ground, the common of the village must have been merely that portion of the forest over which the community claimed as a body settlers' rights. The nearer portions of the forest were no doubt used by the villagers for feeding their cattle and swine.

But there was beyond them a more desolate tract which served to separate the village from its neighbours.[2] And when a number of villages were inhabited by members of the same tribe, a whole group of them, forming what the Latin writers called a *pagus*, and the Germans themselves called a Gau, was divided from the neighbouring Gau by a still wider and more impenetrable belt of forest. For the Gau was the tribe, the embryo state; and Cæsar tells us that it was a point of honour with each German state to have as wide a tract of uncultivated land as possible between itself and its next neighbours.[3]

This surrounding belt of wood, this gloomy and waste region, in the near part of which the ancient German villagers tethered their cattle or herded their pigs, and in the farther recesses hunted wild game, had a special name in the social economy of the Teutons. It was called the *Mark*. As each village had its own mark, so had, in a wider sense, each country or nation. When the tiny embryos of commonwealths, the Gaus expanded into states, the marks, too, grew in importance, and became great territorial divisions, till out of them new countries were in their turn made; such was our Mercia (Myrcna); such the marches between England and Wales; Denmark, the Danes'

[1] I have not attempted to enter the thorny path of controversy on the subject of the so-called 'Village Community.' I have merely followed Waitz. *Verfassungsgesch.* i. 93 *sqq.*

[2] This came to be the true 'forest' of feudal times. [3] *B. G.* iv. 3.

mark (the south of Jutland originally); La Marque, which afterwards separated that country from Germany and the Low Countries; the Wendish Mark or Mark of Brandenburg, which divided Germany from the Slavonic lands. The guardians of the mark were turned into marquises, marchios, markgrafs. At the beginning these guardians were only the chief warriors of the tribe; they had often (we may believe) their home in the waste, and stood there as watchmen between the village and the rest of the world, so that none might come to the village if they came to do it harm. These were *par excellence* the warriors of the tribe, and in some degree they constituted a class apart.

But let us remember that the word *Mark*, which we think of as the boundary between two possibly hostile states, has etymologically, and therefore had originally, no other meaning than *forest*.[1]

We can best understand the incidents of warfare waged by more civilized peoples against the Germans of Germany, the incidents of the campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius, of Marcus Aurelius, of Gratian or Julian, or, again, of Charlemagne's campaigns against the Saxons, if we remember that there must have been a distinction between the ordinary villagers, the more peaceful folk who cultivated the clearings near at hand, and the men of the mark, the warriors who dwelt in the surrounding forest, who when they were not engaged in war were probably hunters merely. There would be a certain lurking suspicion or latent antagonism between the village householder and the mark warrior, analogous to the antagonism which existed between the Franklin and the Thane at a later day. No doubt from the markmen came the band of Gesellen—*Comites* the Latin writers call them—who attached themselves to the person of the king or general, and shared his fortunes. If the leader *should* desire to reward these followers of his by any grant of land (though such reward was exceptional[2]), that gift

[1] So Grimm, *Deutsche Mythol.* 4th ed., p. 56. Fick is not so clear, *Verg. Wbch.* ii. 434. The use of the word *mark* to signify a village community has no authority in its favour.

[2] The *Comites*, we know, ate at their leader's table, and for pay they got arms or ornaments—personalty—things for personal wear or use.

must have come from the surrounding forest; it could not be carved out of the village community itself.[1] Thus might arise a certain aloofness from civil village life on the part of the Gesellen, the prototypes of the Thanes. They were, it may be, to a great extent unmarried men; they had given few pledges to fortune; they had not (generally) acres to be trampled upon, fruit-trees to be cut down, graneries to be burned. The villagers might, if they chose, give in to the conqueror. But the prince and his comrades had escaped, had hidden themselves in deep woods and morasses, and would return and ravage the enemies' country again next year. This is the history of most of the operations against the Germans, notably of those of Charles the Great against the Saxons and against Widukind.

The mark or forest which formed a sort of neutral territory between two villages or two Gaue would serve as the meeting-point between them; for the same reason that during the Middle Ages meetings of rival powers were constantly held upon an island or on a boat in the middle of a stream, as in the case of the island at Runnymead for one example, or, for another, that earliest of treaties made between Romans and Teutons, the treaty signed by Athanaric the Visigoth and the Emperor Valens, where the contracting parties met in a boat upon the Danube;[2] or again on the same principle whereby a duel between Norsemen always took place upon an island, a fact which earned for the duel the name of *holmgang*. What an island was in the midst of a boundary river, such would an open glade be in the midst of the boundary mark. At the meetings which took place therein no doubt the sanctions of religion were called into request, and the glade in the forest, or the grove close beside it, a place not often visited, came to be a sacred place.

II.

The Germans are described as building no fanes, making no

[1] On the king's rights in this uncultivated territory, and afterwards in the *mark* of any new territory see Waitz, *Verfassungsg.* iv. 116.

[2] *Ammian. Marc.*, xxvii. 5, 9.

images for worship, but in their forest recesses calling upon the Unseen Presence (*secretum illud*), which they honoured by the name of various gods (or by various names).[1] The word for *grove* is in many Teutonic languages a convertible word with *temple*:[2] this fact proves, better than a thousand examples, how entirely the religion of the Germans was bound up with their forest life. Grimm says: 'Individual gods may have had their dwellings on mountain-tops or in rocky caverns, but the universal worship of the people found its home in the grove.'

From a writer of the eleventh century we have a precious fragment of ancient belief—the description of a sacred grove in Sweden while Sweden was still heathen. This grove was at the most sacred spot in all the Scandinavian peninsula, Upsala, which has inherited (one might say) its bishopric and university of to-day from the sacred grove of heathendom. 'Every ninth year,' says our authority (Adam of Bremen), 'a festival is celebrated at this place by all the provinces of Sweden; and from taking some part in it none is exempt. King and people alike must send gifts; and even those who have embraced Christianity are not allowed to buy themselves free from attendance. The manner of the sacrifice is this: nine of each kind of living thing is offered, and by their blood the gods are wont to be appeased. The bodies are hung in the grove which surrounds the temple.' So that the Swedes did build temples at this date. But our author tells us further: 'The grove itself is thought so sacred that single trees in it are accounted a kind of gods, to the extent of receiving sacrifices of victims. There hang the bodies of dogs and men alike to the number, as some Christians have assured me, of seventy-two[3] together.'[4]

The last item in this picture seems to glance back to a very primitive worship, not so much a cultus of the *secret presence* in

[1] *Germania*, c. 9.
[2] Grimm, *Deutsche Mythol.*, 4th ed., p. 54; *Nachtrag*, p. 32.
[3] *I.e.*, *nine* times eight.
[4] M. Adami *Descript. insular. aquil.* 27 (Pertz, vii. 380).

the grove, rather to a mere fetich-worship of individual trees; and no doubt this element did mingle with a higher and more imaginative faith.

Further relics of this primitive fetich-worship, so to call it, are to be found in the records, which are numerous enough, of sacred trees, sacred oaks especially, among the heathen Teutons, as among the Celts. The few details which have come down to us of Christian missionary labours among the heathen Germans speak often of the felling by the Christians of these trees; sometimes a church was erected upon their site. The most typical of these instances, the felling of the so-called Jupiter's Oak (Thor's Oak) at Gæsmera (Geismar in Hesse), we shall speak of again in the next chapter.

There were in addition the sacred trees—for they must have been sacred—under which the German people met to hold council. Each village had once its own sacred tree, the prototype of the May-pole—in some degree the prototype too of our Christmas-trees. May-poles are practically extinct with us; nowhere, I believe, are they fixtures now as was 'the May-pole in the Strand' a century ago. But in very many villages in Germany they are fixtures; nay, in many cases they are growing trees, tall pines which have been stripped of all their lower branches. The sacred village tree would be the place of assemblage of the village council. I imagine it standing a little way apart from any of the houses; for it had another duty to perform. It was the tree of judgment. Victims, including human ones, as we have seen, would be required for offerings to the tree-fetich.[1] For the human victims captives of war would serve in an age which had grown too merciful for the sacrifice of its own

[1] '*Stato tempore in silvam . . . coeunt, cæsoque publice homine . . .*' (Tacitus, *l.c.* 39). These remarks assume the existence of a village council. There is for times near to the historical no trace of village councils exercising the judicial functions which would be necessary to provide victims for the fetich-tree (Waitz, *l.c.*). I do not mean, therefore, that at any time proximate to an historical era such sacrifice of human victims to the sacred tree took place in each village. But it began in single villages, only ate was confined to groves particularly sacred. Compare Lat. *tribus*, Germ. *Dorf*.

tribesmen; or, failing prisoners of war, there would be criminals; those, for example, who had been traitors to their own tribe or had deserted to the enemy—*proditores et transfugæ*[1]—those who had made themselves outlaws, and so no longer members of the community, would be the natural and appropriate victims. And they are they to whom the Teutons decreed the punishment of hanging.

Varg-tré (Wolf-tree)—that is to say, outlaws-tree—is one of the most usual names for gallows in the Old Norse poetry. Now, let us remember what Tacitus tells us, namely, that to the chief god of the Germans, to Wodin alone, were human sacrifices offered,[2] and we see that the gallows-tree, which was likewise the sacred tree of the village, must have been dedicated specially to Wodin (Wuotan). To the lower minds, then, and in earlier days, the sacred tree was the village fetich; but to the higher minds or at a later time it was merely Wodin's tree, the symbol of the unseen supreme god.

This is, I imagine, why in the Eddic mythology the gallows-tree is called Ygg's-horse—Wodin's horse (Yggdrasil); and why this same *Yggdrasil* is the sacred tree of the whole world, which, of course, means no more than that a picture drawn from the single village or tribe-stead has been expanded to serve for the whole world, a macrocosmos created out of a microcosmos. I dare say that the importance of this world-tree is heightened in the Eddas through the influence of Christianity and Christian mythology, whereby the cross becomes the tree of life. But I doubt if there is here anything more than the emphasizing of a myth already ancient and in itself perfectly natural.

If a sacred tree decayed or lost its branches, it need not lose its holiness, and there would in this fashion arise a number of very antique tree-stumps or tree-trunks, bare of leaves and branches, which were still a sort of fetich to the people, which were primevally old, and stood in the midst of venerable groves. They would become mere poles or columns, like the dead May-poles of to-day. Such was, I have little doubt,

[1] *Germania*, 12. [2] *Ibid.*, 9.

the Irminsul, Ermine-Säule (Pillar of the Hermiones), which Charlemagne captured and cut down. There is a word used in the Eddas, *meiðr* (*Vinga-meiði á*, 'on the gallows wood'), which seems especially to designate this wood when it has become dead. But from the passage in which this word occurs we gather that the dead wood retained a peculiar sanctity.[1]

We have now, I think, got together the materials to form some picture of the familiar life of the ancient German in days when he was still attached to his ancestral home, before the stir and excitement, the *Sturm und Drang* of the Wandering Age had begun. We see men living beneath or hard by the gloom of a primeval forest, subject to those uncertain visions of light and shade which belong thereto, to its thousand echoes—from the fall of rushing waters, the cries of animals, the crash of stems or branches in the hollow distance, the sobbing of the wind, or the roar of the storm coming from afar. We see the village houses standing apart, gleaming white from among the trees,[2] and still farther apart, and deeper in the forest, the houses reserved for the marchmen, the guardians of the waste. We see the elders of the village withdrawing on one side to sit under some sacred tree or near some holy grove. Thither each member of the community brings at stated times his offering—A savage place, as holy and enchanted as could make it long ages of past worship, and dreadful sacrifices witnessed from then to now, and preserved in memory by the skeletons of the victims hanging in the grove, whitening its darkness.

When Germanicus made his attack upon the Chatti in the Teutoberger Wald, and by a victory wiped out the shame of the defeat of Varus, he found the skulls of the Roman victims fixed to the trees, and the Roman eagles which Arminius had suspended in the groves to the gods of his fathers.[3]

[1] See below, p. 52. [2] Being frequently of white-washed clay.

[3] Tacitus, *Ann.*, i. 59; *cf.* also 61. In ii. 12 a grove is spoken of as dedicate to Thor (Hercules).

We read not seldom in mediæval romance of some cruel and beautiful maiden—a Melusina or some other—whose lovers had to pay with their lives the penalty of trying to win her. Sometimes the court round her castle is filled with their bleaching bones.[1] The story itself is as old as the world almost. But this particular form of it reproduces the picture of the dreadful grove of the Teutons, and the maiden of the myth is not unconnected, I deem, with the priestesses of Wodin. We shall see so much hereafter.

We have only to widen the picture which we have drawn of the ancient Teuton village, leaving out some lesser details, to get a notion of the whole state and its creed, its 'cosmological conception,' as it is called in philosophy, and its conception of the supernatural environment of life. In the place of the sacred village tree we should get one which was honoured by the whole community as was the Irminsul among the Saxon Angrarii, or the Geismar oak among the Hessians. For the sacred grove near the village we should get a grove held sacred by the whole country, such as the groves in which stood the trees just spoken of, or the grove of the Semnones, or that in which Nerthus dwelt, or the grove at Upsala. But the local fetich-worship would somewhat fall into the background and the more spiritual worship of the people as a whole would emerge. And thus all the great gods of the Teutonic pantheon would come before our eyes.

If the ancient Germans built no fanes, the grove served them as a temple; if they made no images of their gods, the individual trees often served them, as Adam of Bremen witnesses, for visible and tangible gods. Still, there was a more imaginative side to their creed. There was a Great God who was not of the fetich kind. He was, says Tacitus, a 'sacred presence' only. Was he? It is hard to believe in so great a step as from the worship of individual trees to the worship of a being unseen, unfelt, *wholly* apart from physical phenomena. Some of the Germans may have been capable of that, but

[1] *E.g., King Ruther.*

surely not all, not many. The Great God whom we know as Wodin, Odin,[1] must have drawn something from his surroundings. Why was his presence reserved so peculiarly for the grove? Granting he was unseen, he may yet have been felt. Without doubt his presence was expressed by the thousand mysterious sounds and breaths of the forest, but most of all by the wind, which is the forest's very essence or spirit.

We have been thinking at present of the western side of Germany, of those forests which had known the presence of Roman soldiers, where Germanicus had found the bones of slain legionaries whitening on the trees. As we passed from this region to the east and north, towards the Baltic shores, we should exchange the mixed forests of hard wood and firs for forests which were almost entirely 'black'—*i.e.*, of fir or pine. For the sandy soil of North Germany will scarcely support a hardier and tardier growth. If the birthplace of Wodin really were near the modern Spreewald, then that birth must have taken place in a black forest.

If in these days we wish to feel the mystic presence of the Great God of the Germans, we must do as our worshipping forefathers did, withdraw from the concourse of men, find out some forest solitude, and wait there. Let it be, if you will, in one of the great stretches of woodland which are to be found in East and West Prussia; or, better still nowadays, go to the vast primeval forests which lie upon the upper slopes of the Scandinavian peninsula, far away from the fjords and the too frequent steps of tourists. There you will feel, as you should, the strange and awful stillness which from time to time reigns in pine-forests such as these. Presently the quiet is broken, first by a sigh which arises, as from the ground itself, and breathes throughout the wood. Anon, from a distance a sound is heard so like the sound of the sea that you might swear (had you never been in such a wood before) that

[1] The Lombardic name is Gwodan (Paul., *Diac.*, i. 9); the Saxon, Woden (*Forma Abrenunt.* in Pertz's *Leges*, i., and Merseburg Formula); the English, Wodin (*Saxon Chronicle*); the Scandinavian, Odin. As the English form is the most familiar, it will be the one employed hereafter.

you could hear the waves drawing backwards over a pebbly beach. As it approaches the sound grows into a roar; it is the roar of the tempest, the coming of Wodin.

I can imagine that the sealike sound of the forest wind may have been in part the reason why the Scandinavian Odin appears sometimes as a sea-god, or at least as a god who has a home beneath the sea. 'Sunkbench (*Sökkvabekkr*),' says an Eddic poem describing the palaces of the gods—

> Sunkbench is called the fourth, which the cold waves
> Ever murmur above:
> There Odin and Saga[1] drink all day long
> Gladly from golden cups.[2]

Another, however, and a stronger reason is that Odin's wife, Frigg, who is the Nerthus of Tacitus,[3] is in part a goddess of the sea—though she is still more an earth-goddess. And when in mythology a god and goddess are married, each necessarily acquires some portion of the nature of the other. How Nerthus comes to be a goddess both of the earth and sea is no doubt a matter which needs some inquiry, but we have no space for it here. That she is so seems almost certain. It is Tacitus who calls her Nerthus, and adds, '*id est Terra mater*.' But that very word Nerthus must be connected with Njörd of the Eddic mythology; and Njörd most certainly was a god of the sea. Frigg appears clearly as an earth-goddess: but her palace is Fensalir, 'Fen-Hall,' or even 'Wave-Hall.'

And now we return to Wodin and the forest wind.

It will be said by some that this description is purely imaginary. I make a distinction between what is imaginative and what is imaginary. If you choose not to go into the study of mythology or of beliefs of any kind till you have first stripped yourself of your imagination, you will travel indeed lightly burdened, and you will arrive at strange re-

[1] The Seeress. [2] *Grimnismál* 7 (Bugge) (*Corp. Poet. Bor.*, i. 70).
[3] Proved to be so by her relations to the Lombards. *Cf.* Tacitus, *Germania*, 40, and Paul., *Diac.*, i. 8.

sults. Because, as belief of all kinds is born of the imagination, and *Aberglaube* is, as Goethe says, the poetry of life, you will have taken the precaution of going into the dark unprovided with a lantern. To avoid doing this you are not obliged, however, to give free rein to your fancy. Nor have we done so here. Put shortly, the case stands thus: We know that the Germans lived a forest life, that their groves were their temples, that they did not, as a rule, make images of the gods, that they did not even imagine their Great God visible to sight, but thought of him as an unseen (*secretum*) presence. But they must have been strangely advanced in their religious notions, and on that side quite out of pace with their culture in other respects, if they could dispense with all sensuous apprehension of their divinity. I do not think, therefore, a picture which would make some of the Teutons identify their Great God with a visible great tree, oak or ash or pine, and others more imaginative, hear and feel his presence in the forest wind, so deserving of the epithet imaginary, as a theory which would give the god a *name* and nothing more, no sensible reality at all.

Nay, it would require some strong argument to show that Odin, who is a god of battles before he is anything else, who rides through the air on the swiftest of horses, whose son is the Thunder-god, his son and his comrade in battle, was not the god who rode on the whirlwind and directed the storm. For men have at all times—and of this their language is the best witness—confounded the storm and the fury of battle, the storm of battle, I might say, with the battle of the elements.

The storm of spears and Odin's wrath

is the name for battle in the Edda songs.

There was a sound familiar to the Roman soldier of the later empire, in days when the greater part of the Roman soldiery were of barbarian origin. It was called *barritus*, a word which is said to be a German gloss;[1] it is certainly not

[1] Forcellini, s.v.

a Latin one. If the word is German, then the *barritus* must be a German institution. This was the manner of it. It was raised by the Roman legionaries before going into battle; and it seems to have been made by placing the rim of the shield below the mouth, and then raising a long more or less musical howl or cry, the shield serving as a sounding-board. The *barritus* began in a gentle murmur and gradually swelled to a great body of sound, audible afar off, and expressly compared by some of the classical writers to the roar of the sea. The soldiers augured well or ill of the success of the coming battle, according as the *barritus* rose harmoniously into full swell or no. The sound must have been the very counterpart of the sound of the wind in a pine-forest. It may be, it even seems to be, this very practice and this very sound which is referred to in an Eddic poem, where Odin is made to say of his favourites going into battle—

I sing under their shields.[1]

All depends, I know, upon whether it be decided that the *barritus* really was a German institution, and that seems to depend more than anything upon the etymology of the word—a question upon which I am not capable of speaking. There are considerable difficulties in the way of accepting it; and I give this illustration only for what it may be worth. It illustrates the character of Wodin as a god of battles; it is not needed to establish it.[2]

[1] *Hávamál*, 19 (*Corp. P. B.*) 'under randir ek gol'—which we might translate 'under their shields I yell.' Comp. the description of the *barditus* in Tacitus, *G.* 3. But see next note.

[2] Grimm first suggested the reading of *barritus* for *barditus* in *Germ.* 3. He was followed by Orelli. But I believe there is no MS. authority for the change. 'Bard,' a poet, is a Celtic not a Teutonic word. *Barritus* is believed to be a Teutonic gloss (see Forcellini, s.v.) However that may be, it is not spoken of by the classical writers as used by the German barbarians, but by the soldiers (very probably of German origin no doubt) in the Roman army. The wild howling of the Goths was answered by the more rhythmic sound of the *barritus*, is what Ammian says, speaking of the battle of Marcianopolis. We also hear of the same sound being raised by the Roman soldiers in Mesopotamia. There is nothing, of course, in all this to prove that the *barritus* was not a Teutonic barbarian invention.

Add to the foregoing picture that Wodin sometimes wanders over the earth in a more peaceful character; that he visits men in their homes, when they do not know him, and at such times takes the form of an old grey man, one-eyed, wrapped in a cloak. This we may take to be the wind visiting the earth in a gentler fashion.

III.

Thor or Donar, the god next greatest after Wodin, nobody has ever questioned was the Thunder; for his German name has remained unchanged. And looking upon Odin as the tempest of the air, it is appropriate enough that Thorr is a son of Odin and of Earth (Hlóðyn); that he does not ride a-horseback through the clouds, but thunders over the hills in his chariot. Thorr is red-bearded; from the flash of lightning. He is the parent of more than one Rodbard (Rothbart), Robert or Robin of Middle Age romance. To us he is most familiar as wielder of the hammer of Thor, the bolt; *mjölnir*, the crusher, it was called in the north. It is on this account that he is called Hercules by Tacitus; Wodin, as we know, being identified with Mercury. Jupiter is the true equivalent for Thor, and this equivalence was recognized by the Germans of the border when they adopted the Roman week of seven days, but named the days after their own divinities—Thors-day, Wodins-day, Tius-day, Freyjas-day, and so forth.[1]

By the side of Wodin Thor is a somewhat rustic figure. He has been spoken of as the peasant's god, or say rather the franklin's or the bonder's god, whereas Odin is the warrior's god *par excellence*, the god of the thane, the earl, or the prince, the begetter of royal houses. It cannot, however, be said that

Rydberg assumes, without hesitation, that it was a war-cry familiar to all the Germans. The *barritus* is mentioned in the following places in Ammian, xvi. 12, 48; xxi. 13, 15; xxvi. 7, 17; xxxi. 7, 11. Many of the occasions on which it was used were (it will be seen) by the Romans troops in the East.

[1] Sunday is probably really taken from the Roman sun-worship, not from any god in the Teutonic pantheon, and Monday in like manner. Saturday may likewise be from the Roman Saturn.

this distinction always holds.[1] There is evidence that Thor was cherished more even than Wodin in the popular mythology of the Middle Ages. And, strange to say, this cherishing has in his case taken away from his reputation in our eyes. He is, in reality, more familiar to us than any other god of the northern pantheon, for he is the hero of half the nursery stories of giants and trolls. But that is a familiarity which brings with it contempt; and it would be impossible now-a-days to invest either Thor or his antagonists the giants (*jötnar*) with one tithe of the seriousness, or even majesty, which they once possessed for the Teutonic mind.

The third of Tacitus' triad, whom he calls Mars, is Tiu or Tius, or, in the north, Tyr. But though Tiu was a great god with the Germans in Tacitus's day, he has sunk to be a rather shadowy person in the Edda mythology, and the traces of him in local names and popular legends are very much fewer than in the case of Wodin or Thor. In days much more distant than those of Tacitus, Tiu must have (one thinks) been the supreme divinity of the Teutons. And we can thus trace his decline through three stages. But as we have no picture of him in his days of greatness, we cannot say much concerning his character. In the Eddas Tyr is a rather shadowy counterpart of Odin; and his name (one proof of his former greatness) is used very often as the abstract name for god. Thus *fimbul-tyr*, great tyr, great god, when used in the Eddas, does not mean this divinity, but Odin.

In revenge for this decline of the Mars-god in Tacitus' triology, we gain from the Eddic Pantheon two other gods of great importance, of whom the classical writers give but slight hints. These are Frey and Balder, beings very much alike in character, *one* of whom certainly was known to the

[1] There is, in fact, plenty of evidence of Thor being placed before Odin in the hierarchy of many of the Teutonic nations. *Cf.* Dudo, bk. i., and the *Forma abrenuntiationis* in Pertz, *Leg.* i.: 'Ec forsacho allum dioboles wercum end wordum, Thunaer ende Woden ende Saxnote' (=Tyr?) According to Adam of Bremen Odin was essentially a god of battles; Thor a protector against sickness, *loco cit.*

continental Germans. As Balder or Phol the god appears in one of the two incantations which I have said are almost the only genuine documents of *German* heathendom which have come down to our day. From that single fragment we can form no conception of the place which Balder held in the creed of heathen Germany. In the Norse mythology he is a young god, young and remarkably beautiful, and fair in complexion; he is essentially a god of peace. He is generally spoken of as one that is already dead, who has descended into the lower-world—to a place of mild happiness not of torture[1]—to Hades not Gehenna, therefore—has gone down into Hell in that older significance of the phrase which our prayer-books have retained. He is to come again, moreover, according to the Eddic myth, after the destruction of the world at Ragnarök, and reign over a renovated earth. Altogether Balder is endowed by the Edda poets with so many of the attributes and so much of the history of the 'White Christ,' that we cannot now say how far he is to be looked upon as a real creation of ancient German belief. But then we must remember that this 'White Christ,' known to the sagas, has evidently borrowed something from the native god Balder. So we may say, perhaps, that though the milder aspects of this god of the Peace-steads have been emphasied, they have not been invented, and that Balder was from the beginning (like Frey) a god of spring and of the sun, of vegetation and of the blessings of the soil.

Frey is much more genuinely heathen than Balder, but likewise more exclusively Scandinavian. He is to be worshipped, the *Gylfaginning*[2] tells us, 'for good harvests and for peace.' He, too, is evidently a god of sunshine and of spring. At Upsala Frey formed one of a triology, which included Odin and Thor, excluding Tyr;[3] the three grave-mounds of these gods are still shown there. Frey was, too, the progenitor of the Yngling race, which ruled in Sweden and in Norway. That there was some being like him in character

[1] *See* Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythol.* 248, *sqq.*

[2] Younger Edda (*Edda Snorra*). [3] Adam of Bremen *loco cit.*

among the gods of the ancient Germans we must believe; most probably this was Balder, so that Frey can hardly be classed among the divinities of the ancient Germans.

For the peaceable side of life, however, the principal divinities would naturally be those of the female sex. Nerthus is the most important of that number whose name can be recovered. She, as we know (like Balder in this), proclaimed peace wherever she went. She was, as we have already seen, not unlike the Demeter of the Greeks; she had apparently her myth of wandering, and her Triptolemus-myth, the mission of Skef as the civilizer of mankind. And if we take the analogy of the Eddic religion, we may believe that by the side of this matronly goddess, *Terra Mater*, stood a younger one—a sort of Persephone — formed, so to say, out of the elder chthonic being. We know how difficult it is in Greek art, and the more difficult the farther we go back, to distinguish between Demeter and Persephone.[1] A similar confusion of mother and daughter, of older and younger goddess, is represented in the likeness in name between Frigg, the wife of Odin, and Freyja, the daughter of Njörd, the sister and feminine counterpart of Frey.[2] There are other names for the matron goddess, Mother-earth, in the German mythology. Perchta, Bertha is one, a name which survived late in German folk-lore. But we are not concerned, happily, with the *names* of our divinities; were it so the obscurities and ramifications of our subject would be increased a hundredfold.

Tacitus speaks of another goddess worshipped by a part of the Suevi. But he does not give her native name. He calls her Isis. *Pars Suevorum et Isidi sacrificat.* That this

[1] *E.g.*, in the Harpy Tomb from Xanthos in the British Museum. See on this subject Gerhardt, *Gr. Myth.* § 240, 4; and in *Akad. Abt.* ii. 357; and Overbeck, *Gr. Kunstmyth.* ii. 442, 448.

[2] Freyja is the daughter of Njörd, who is the male counterpart of Nerthus as Frey of Freyja. Therefore Nerthus may as easily be identified with Freyja as with Frigg. Frigg, like Freyja, belongs to the race of the Vanir, not to that of the Æsir. I do not know whether any connection has ever been suggested between Nerthus and Nirṛtis, the Chthonic goddess of the *Rig Veda*.

Isis was essentially different from Nerthus we cannot believe. She was probably only the Earth-mother looked at from a different point of view, of which we have next to speak.

For the everyday creed of the ancient Germans, we must be content with the faint outlines which we have been able to draw—with the awful War-god of the grove; sometimes however seen in a milder aspect as a wanderer among the homes of men; with Thunder driving in his chariot over the hills; and with other divinities of less importance, who fight at his side and at the side of Wodin. Then with a peaceful spring god who can wield arms well enough if called upon. And, finally, with Mother-Earth, who like her husband Wodin, is at times a wanderer among mankind, who loves peace and happy festivals, but about whom there is likewise something mysterious and terrible—'a holy ignorance and mysterious horror' as Tacitus says. Whence came this fear and mystery? we will now ask.

IV.

There is to every creed another side beside its familiar everyday aspect; and there was such to the creed of the ancient Germans. It had a mysterious, a mystic or magical side. In this the chief parts were played by Wodin and Nerthus. That procession of the goddess Nerthus, as it is described to us, partakes of the nature of a dramatic representation, a symbol of the mythic wanderings of the Earth-mother, in just the same way that the Eleusinian journey symbolized the wanderings of the Greek Mother-Earth. And when we find Tacitus telling us that *pars Suevorum* worshipped Isis, we must suppose that he recognized for *that* goddess, at any rate (whether he had Nerthus in his mind or no), that she stood at the head of a mystery. For the Romans only knew Isis as a goddess worshipped in this fashion. It would be impossible for a Roman author to speak of a German goddess as Isis, unless he thought he saw a mystery connected with her worship.

I use the word 'mystery' here in a very definite sense. I do not mean merely that there was something awful and hidden

or half understood about the divinity. That may be predicated of any god. I mean that there were connected with certain selected divinities, ceremonies which were recognized to be in a special sense mysterious and holy, possessing magical properties, conferring miraculous powers, needing a selected body of priests or priestesses to keep up the tradition of them, and transmit their divine influence.

It is the special note of a mystery that it so often outlives the stage of belief in which it had its origin and to which it naturally belongs. We know how eminently this was the case with the classical mysteries, especially with two of them, the Mysteries of Isis and the Eleusinia. It is reckoned that we can trace the history of the latter almost absolutely unchanged for a thousand years.[1] No creed could well remain the same for so long, least of all among the quick-witted Greeks. The Eleusinia long survived the official recognition of Christianity; they were finally uprooted by the monks coming into Greece in the wake of Alaric's invading army in A.D. 391. Much the same was the history of the mysteries of Isis and Serapis,[2] which after they had already been transmitted through countless centuries, Egypt bequeathed—in a changed form no doubt—to Rome, and which Rome adopted when her own beliefs were fading. It is the same, if I may be permitted to say so, with the Christian mysteries, which are essentially primitive and mediæval in character,[3] and not really in harmony with the Christianity of to-day.

If therefore we find, as we do, a ceremony almost identical with the ceremony of the progress of Nerthus surviving in a part of Lower Germany as late as the twelfth century, and recognized by the Christian writers of that time as a survival of heathenism, we have strong confirmatory evidence of the

[1] P. R. Förster, *Raub u. Rückkehr der Persephone.* If we were to follow the anthropological method (a loose one generally) of tracing *some part* of the ceremonies to savage customs, the period might of course be extended almost indefinitely.

[2] Serapis, of course, is only a Roman divinity under this name, which is a corruption of Apis.

[3] As we shall have hereafter some occasion to note. See Chap. XVI.

mystic significance attaching to the acted progress of the Earth goddess.[1]

And I myself—though this must remain a matter of inference only—have very little doubt that the story of the boat-borne Sceáf is, in its turn, closely connected with the worship of Nerthus, and that we have here another mystery associated with the parent one, much as the story of Triptolemus was associated with the worship of Demeter.

There always arises a certain community between a god and the goddess who is his wife. Demeter ought no doubt as a chthonic divinity to be married to a god of Earth, whereas she is married to a god of Heaven. But then her other self, her daughter is married to the chthonic Aidoneus; and Demeter's husband Zeus himself *sometimes* shares in her nature—there is in Greek mythology a Zeus Chthonios, as well as a Zeus of heaven.

So it is in the relations between Wodin and Nerthus; and the point at which meet the naturally opposite characters of the heavenly War-god and the peaceful Earth, is where we find Wodin, as we have said we do find him, wandering over the earth disguised as an old man, clad very often in beggar's weeds. This portrait of him is like the picture of Demeter in her wanderings, sitting down in the guise of a slave near the palace of Keleos. Wodin was not always treated so well as was Demeter by Keleos's daughters. On one occasion he came to the house of a king Geirröð. He was seized as a beggar, an outlaw, and placed between two fires. And there is more in this story than meets the eye at first sight, for by a comparison with other myths, Geirröð is seen to be a sort of King of Death.[2]

On another occasion more distantly alluded to, Wodin was still worse handled, was actually hung as an outlaw on the

[1] See *Chron. Rudolfi Abb. Sanct. Trud.* (Pertz, xii. 309) and Grimm, *D. M.* i. 214.

[2] The Geruth of Gorm's (the northern Odysseus') voyage in Saxo Grammaticus (Ed. Müller and Velschow) p. 420. See also below.

vargtré, that is to say, upon his own tree, an offering to himself In one of the earliest Eddic fragments the god is made to say—

> I know that I hung on the gallows tree[1]
> Nine nights long;
> To Odin offered, with a spear wounded,
> Myself to myself.[2]

These myths are the foundation of the mysteries of Wodin.

The number nine was an especially sacred one to the Germans. Their original week was one of nine days. We have noted some instances already of the recurrence of the number. In the Upsala celebration which took place every *ninth* year, *nine* of each kind of living thing was offered.[3] And with this picture of the Upsala sacrifice in our thoughts, we need to listen to the mystic verses quoted above.

Nothing, I know, is more misleading in ordinary mythology (open-air mythology, if I may use the expression), than a reliance upon chance identity of numbers. But it is the peculiar mark of mysteries and philosophies of a mystic kind that numbers have in them, or are supposed to have, a deep meaning. Juggling with numbers is, in fact, a special form of magic among people at a certain stage of culture.

It is possible that one detail, that of the wounding with a spear, may be a semi-Christian addition to the picture of Wodin on the gallows-tree.[4] But I do not think the picture, as a whole, is Christian, but genuinely and anciently German, connected with the natural character of the god. The complete genealogy of the ancient rites of sacrifice from the days of the grove of the Semnones to the time of the sacrifices in the grove at Upsala, is clear and self-consistent, and does not admit of any

[1] 'On the gallows tree,' *vinga-meiði a.* See ante p. 39.

[2] *Corp. P. B.* i. 24. *Hávamál* (Edda, Bugge) 138.

[3] *Cf.* also the *ninety-nine* victims at the sacrifice in Leire, which also took place every *ninth* year. Thietmari, *Chr.* i. 9 (Pertz, iii. 739–40). There were *nine* regions in Niflhel (Vafþ. 43); *nine* giant-maids of the Ocean or Island Mill (Ey-lúd) [*C.P.B.* ii. 54], three *nines* of maidens (Valkyriur); see below.

[4] Rydberg has shown that there was nothing antique in that supposed custom of spear-risting.

Christian element. And with the one exception of the passage 'with a spear wounded,' the picture of Wodin hung upon the *vargtré*, and offered as an offering to himself, is on all fours with these ancient rites. The story of the mystery alluded to in the verse just quoted, I believe to be only a variant of the story of Wodin and Geirröd.

Geirröd, we have said, proves to be a god of the under-world. Wodin, when he had hung nine nights upon the *vargtré*, descended (so we gather) into some under-world, and brought thence wisdom or inspiration as his prize—*nine* all-powerful Rune songs—

> I peered down, I caught up the Runes;
> Crying I caught them up, down I descended;
> Mighty songs *nine* I learned from the far-famed son
> Of Bälthorn, Besli's father.[1]

There are to be found very many stories and traces of more which tell of Wodin's descent into the lower-world for the sake of bringing up *wisdom* as his prize. The most famed descent was that to the well of Mîmir, a king of a portion of the lower-world. On that occasion Wodin had to leave as a pledge one of his eyes, out of which Mîmir made a cup to drink from. It is only a variant of this myth which is alluded to in the above verse—for the son of Bälthorn and brother of Besli is Mîmir.

This story of Wodin's descent to the under-world in search of magic fits in well enough with the natural character of the supreme God of the Teutons.[2] Wodin is first the Tempest-god,

[1] *Háv.* 139, 140.

[2] Vigfusson thinks that Odin's name is connected with the root *ôd*, inspiration. One of the verses of *Hávamál* (160) says:—

> Þat kann-ek iðr fimtánda es gól Þióðreyrir
> Dvergr fyr Dellings durom.

Vafþruðnismál (24) says of Delling:—

> Dellingr heitr hann es Dags faðir.

So that the *Great Inspirer* (Þióðreyrir), from whom Odin gains his wisdom, dwells at the edge of the world, or say below the edge of the world, before the doors of the house of day. See below under section vii.

the rusher over land and sea, the god of battle, the chooser of warriors, the inspirer of battle fury, that fury to which the Northmen gave the name of *berserksgangr*. But he is, secondly, the wanderer over the earth, the teacher of writing (magic writing), wisdom, and incantations. If Wodin in his first character commended himself best to the warrior portion of the population, Wodin in his second character would be worshipped more by the peaceful section; for in the most warlike states there always is a peaceful section of the population. Now I think it might be shown that the practice of *mysteries* arises in all cases out of ancient rustic rites, rites which are attached to the soil, not brought in by conquerors.

Among the Romans under the Empire the conquered races, Egyptians and Syrians, supplied the bulk of magicians and soothsayers; the Finns did the same for the Scandinavians. Always the weaker part of the population possesses and guards these mysteries and magic rites. It might be urged as an argument that the Germans were autochthonous, that we find among them the women as chief soothsayers. This fact all the classical writers witness.

'Cæsar found that the reason of the delay [of Ariovistus in coming to an engagement] was that a custom prevailed among the Germans of waiting till their women have declared by sortelege and prophecy whether it is desirable to engage in battle or not.'[1] We might fill a chapter with quotations having the same tendency. In the day of the revolt of Civilis we know how the inhabitants of the Batavian Island hung upon the words of prophecy coming from the druda called Veleda, who dwelt in a lonely tower, not in their own country but among the Bructerii higher up the river.[2]

The succession of these seeresses among the Teutons is an apostolic succession, with no break, no essential change of character, only such change as time must bring, from the day of the wife of Ariovistus, of Veleda or Aurinia, through the days of a certain spæ-wife, Ota, whom we discern in the dim

[1] *B. G.* i. 50, *cf.* Dio Cass. xxxviii. 48.
[2] Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 61.

light of the Viking period seated upon the high altar of an Irish minster, and 'giving her answers' therefrom, or of the last of the wise-woman among the Old Germans, of whom we discover some trace in a chronicler of the ninth century,[1] onwards to the heroines of the Edda lays, Sigrdrífa or Brynhild, Sigrún, Sváva, Áslaug and the rest. Here is a verse from the lay of one of these heroines, which I translate on account of its rare beauty. Sigrdrífa is here the spæ-wife. She had been disobedient to Odin by taking the wrong side in a contest between two princes, and for that reason had been punished by a long sleep, or by death. But from that spell the hero of the lay Sigrœd (Sigurd)—like his after-type who awoke the sleeping beauty—aroused her. She awoke and said—

Long have I slept, long in slumber lain,
Long the spells lie on men,
Odin has bound me thus, that I might not
Break the sleep-bands.[2]
Hail to the day, hail to the Sons of day!
Hail Night and Earth!
Look with kind eyes over us twain,
And bless us as here we sit.
Hail to the Æsir, hail the Asynior!
Hail to thee, Mother Earth!
Grant us two lovers good words [3] and wisdom,
And healing hands while we live.[4]

Then follows a list of charms which Sigrdrífa sang over Sigurd and taught him to repeat.

Of the seeresses who exercised so widespread an influence and filled so important a place in the social economy of the Teutons, some lived, we see, as mysterious recluses—like the Lady Minnetrost in Fouqué's *Zauberring*. But at stated times such an one came among the people. Taking her

[1] Thiota by name, *cf. Ann. Fuldens*, A.D. 847. She was a contemporary of Ota. See Chapter VI.

[2] Lit., 'staves.'

[3] Lucky words, *εὐφημιά*? The word used is simply *mál*, speech. It may mean runes to make the dead speak.

[4] *Sigrdrífumál*, 2–4. In *C. P. B.* better arranged under the heading of the *Old Play of the Wolsungs*, i. 40.

'high seat,' she sat at the festivals, as Ota on the high altar at Clonmacnoise, and people came one by one before her to consult the oracle.[1] There is no talk of any special frenzy like that of the Delphic priestess. But the seat of prophecy was a special one, capable apparently of imparting some virtue to the Vala. The last line of the Völuspâ, *nu mun hon sökkvaz*, 'now must she descend,' has generally been interpreted to refer to the coming down from this high seat.[2] Sometimes she went from place to place in her car, and the days of her coming were days of festival; altogether the picture is not unlike the picture of Nerthus drawn round on her triumphal course; the Vala may be considered as a visible representative of the goddess, for Nerthus herself, as we know, was always hidden from view. There can be little doubt that Nerthus was a partner in the mysteries, and like her human representative especially gifted in magic arts.

V.

The investigation of the preceding section may discover to us, or reasonably suggest, the existence of a sort of guild or college of prophetesses, devoted in a rather peculiar way to the worship of Wodin and of Nerthus or Frigg: in rather a peculiar way, I mean, because they worshipped the former in his character as the god of wisdom and magic, as what an anthropologist would call the great medicine-man. They might disobey him after they had been initiated, as Cassandra refused to pay Apollo the price of her gift of prophecy. Sigrdrifa disobeyed Odin by siding with Agnar against Odin's favourite Helm-Gunnar. But this freedom did not prevent the seeresses being as a body the maidens of Odin. They were not all vestals; many were married, like Ariovistus' wife, or the above-mentioned Ota, whose husband was a Viking leader, Thorgisl. It would, one can imagine, give no small

[1] *Cf.* Vigfusson *Icel. Dict.* s.v. Völva.

[2] Though it must be allowed that *sökkva* hardly bears such an interpretation, and Rydberg gives it a different one. The line rather suggests that the Völva has been raised from the under-world.

prestige to a king or leader could he secure one of these prophetesses for a wife.

So far for this belief, and the rites which had belonged to it in early days, while it was still attached to the more peaceful side of Wodin's character. But it was inevitable that the warrior's creed should take possession of this also. The Vala's wisdom though acquired at times of peace would be from the first called into use in times of war. Therefore when Wodin, from the homely mysterious wanderer on earth, changed back to be the battle-god, riding on the whirlwind, his college of maidens was transferred from earth to heaven. They were accredited with the same powers of riding the storm. In virtue of these they became the troop of the helm-maidens of Odin, the northern Amazons, who appear in the Eddas. There they are called Valkyriur or 'Choosers of the slain.' As Odin rode through the clouds on his eight-footed horse Sleipnir, so did the Valkyriur, too, ride on white horses through the air. They had a nature-side to their character: they were identified sometimes with the clouds. This we see from a verse of the Eddic poetry, not less beautiful than that which I quoted just now.

Three troops[1] of maidens (says one poem), though one maid foremost rode,
A white and helmed maid.
Their horses shook themselves, and from their manes there fell
Dew in the deep dales, on the high trees hail.

I take it that the descent of these northern Valkyriur from the ancient race of German prophetesses is continuous, and such as presents no reasonable grounds for scepticism. The Valkyriur were just as much Völvas, wise-women, as was any Veleda or Aurinia of ancient times. Wodin, again, as the god of magic, must have been connected with these Veledas or Aurinias just as much as we know Odin to have been connected with a Sigrdrífa or Sváva, whom we meet with in the Edda.

When the Valkyriur did not ride through the air on horses

[1] Lit., 'Three *nines* of maidens.' See above. The three swan-maidens of the *Völundakviða* abode with their lovers till the *ninth* year, v. 3.

they changed themselves into birds, more particularly into swans.

Our northern poetry is full of the swan, the most poetic of all the birds which haunt the Baltic shores and bays. In that region is indigenous the singing swan, a variety which has some essential differences of construction from the mute swan, the only kind which we know upon our lakes and rivers. It raises its clear trumpet notes while it flies and wheels in flocks; it migrates southward, and is seen upon the Ægean, but it does not belong to the south. This swan was the first messenger who came from the north to the south, preceding by so many years the hordes of warriors who travelled in its wake, bringing from a part of the world unknown that lay which has made the swan the emblem of the poet in every land:—

> Multa Dircæum levat aura cycnum,
> Tendit, Antoni, quoties in altos
> Nubium tractus.

The Teutonic name of the *swan* comes from this faculty of singing, and shows us that our forefathers knew the singing swan better than we do.[1] They connected the swan, moreover, much more with the sea than we do; calling the sea, for example, the 'swan's road,' an expression which occurs in *Beówulf*. Therefore the swan would be a not inappropriate bird for a goddess like Nerthus, who came over the sea, and was *in part* a sea-goddess. There are three things which connect Nerthus with the swan: one, the fact that her *Liebling* Sceáf appears in Middle Age tradition as the swan-knight: another, that her *alter ego* the old German Perchta, Bertha, appears likewise in Middle Age tradition as Bertha with the swan-feet; a third, that, Njörð, the male counterpart of Nerthus (of a later age), is likewise specially connected with swans.[2]

[1] Mullenhoff, *Deutsche Alterthk.* beginning.

[2] 'The howl of the wolf
To my ears sounded ill
By the song of the swan'—
this was Njörð's complaint when compelled to spend half his time in the mountains with his wife, a daughter of the mountains.

There was every reason therefore why the shield-maidens of Wodin, if they were connected with Wodin and Nerthus, as the god and goddess of magic, should have the power of changing themselves into swans.

We can reason out the growth of a belief; for looked at over a wide area, and followed through a sufficient period of time, every belief has a kind of reason and a kind of reality. But to each individual in his brief span of life it is like the wind, he cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. To the simple northern bonder mending his plough or his nets, or sharpening his weapons, the sound of the swans far overhead, chanting their lay through the short night, was in reality the sound of Odin's maidens singing incantations, hurrying through the air to some battlefield, to take part in the slaughter, or choose among the slain denizens for Walhalla (Valhöll).

They were proceeding south maybe, forerunners, we have said, of the human flocks from the same Baltic shores. And, strange to say, the order of their flight was in nine cases out of ten one which was rather a special favourite with the Teuton races, the form of a wedge. The wedge formation was known probably to all the Germans;[1] nevertheless the Goths believed that it has been specially revealed to the ancestor of their royal line the Amalings. The formation is called in Icelandic literature *fylking hamal*,[2] as having been taught by Wodin to Hamal, the ancestor of the Amalings.[3] How appropriate if this wedge formation were a special secret of Wodin's, that the swan-maidens should choose that for their flight; or, put it the other way, and say how uncanny might it seem to a superstitious Teuton to see the formation of his own ranks imitated with such exactness by a flying troop overhead!

In the Viking Age the warlike side of the spæ-wife's

[1] *Cf.* Tacitus, *Germ.* 6. *Acies per cuneos compositus;* and again *Hist.* iv. 16, *Frisios, Batavos, propriis cuneis componit* [*Civilis*].

[2] *Fylkja hamalt*, 'to dress a battle array as Hamal taught.'

[3] *Fylking*, it is worth while noticing, translates the Latin *legio*, which, in its turn, is the equivalent of the *cuneus* of the barbarians, as Tacitus uses the word. However in this sense *fylking* is rather to be translated 'array of battle.'

character came more and more to the front. All the heroines of the great epic cycle in the north, belong to the race of Valkyriur; they are shield-maidens, or even war-goddesses.

'Huggustu Sigrun! Hildr hefir þu oss vesit.'[1]

We know how often *hildr* (war) was the termination of a feminine name, as of Brynhild, Swanhild (a name peculiarly suitable to a Valkyrja) Grimhild, Ragnhild, and many more.[2]

As we are not here dealing with the later Norse, but the earlier German beliefs, we cannot follow this elaborate and beautiful myth of the Valkyriur through all its developments. That must be left to its proper place in the history of Heathendom. But the root of all is to be found in the ancestral beliefs of the Germans touching their wise women, and the god from whom they learned their wisdom.

How much influence these primeval beliefs of Germany touching mysteries and magic had upon the mediæval beliefs upon the same subjects, it would be no easy task to determine. When we are speaking of a heathen creed we class together the two sets of beliefs implied by these two words, 'mysteries' and 'magic'; they are not identical, but they are nearly allied. In speaking of Christianity in any shape it is usual to separate them; to speak of the practices authorized by the Church as mysteries, of those not authorized as magical. In both departments, probably, the influence of the Teutonic creed was great. What it *may have* been in the case of orthodox belief we may measure by what it certainly *was* in the case of that which was unorthodox, or at least unauthorized—popular superstition.

For the reader, I will presume, has already detected to what offspring gave rise in the Middle Ages the Old Teutonic belief in Wodin, and his college of prophetesses. We have only to change the supreme 'wisdom' of ancient days to the 'black art' of a later age, the god of heathendom to the Satan of

[1] 'Comfort thee, Sigrun, a war-goddess hast thou been to me.'

[2] Hildr is most used as a *masculine prefix* in Old Teutonic, *e.g.*, Hildebrand (Hildebraht), and a *feminine suffix* in Old Norse.

Christendom, and the shield-maidens of Wodin to the Night Hags who rode to meet Satan on the Blocksberg, and the transformation, natural as it is, is complete. Still it is an apostolical succession; there is no important link lost in the long sequence. The Brocken takes the place, say, of Wodin's grove in Central Germany, of Nerthus's island, or the grove where Charlemagne found the Irminsul of the Angrarii, as the metropolitan seat or see of this transformed worship. But, as in the earlier examples, the Brocken was only the chief out of many similar holy (or unholy) sites. The legend of the Witches Sabbath was everywhere the most deep-seated of all the superstitions of Mediæval Europe.

VI.

The sight of what must have been one of the deepest laid beliefs of German Heathendom developing into one of the most steadfast superstitions of Mediæval Catholicism must make us ask, how far that body of belief, which was during the latter age the most absorbing of all, may have been affected by the creed of heathen Germany. I mean the belief touching the other world.

There is a certain illogical logic about all mythologies. Where philosophy leaps at once to abstract terms and speaks of an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent deity—mythology aiming at the same notions, proceeds, agreeably to its nature, by positive imagery, in place of negative *abs*-traction. The supreme god of the Teutons is not omniscient nor omnipotent; but he is, as we have seen, pre-eminent in magic, in that great region of the might-be in which you can set no bound to possibilities. What Odin learned at Mîmir's Well; what hidden potencies had the charms he there acquired—Who can put a limit to these?

So it stands again with the notion of omnipresence. That abstraction is best expressed to thought by a negative—no place *without* the deity. Positive mythology, in the case of Wodin or Thor, stopped a long way short of that. But it went

on multiplying the places in which the great god might be sought and found. The deity dwelt most of all, say, in that sacred grove of the Semnones, whereof we have so often spoken. But he was present, after a kind, in every other sacred grove, he was *secretum illud* of each village's holy place. Just so to the Catholic, Christ is in heaven, but He likewise—and in this case not the spirit only, but the *body* as well—is present on every altar.

In addition to the holy grove of the village, of the Gau, or of the whole nation or group of nations, we may feel sure that the ancient Germans had likewise the notion of another home of the gods, a holy city in the clouds or on the borders of earth. Among the Scandinavians this Teutonic Olympus is the Ása-burg, Ása-gard, a heavenly place invisible to mortal sight, or, shall we say, visible from time to time *between* the clouds of sunset. From the Æsir's burg the rainbow —the gods' bridge[1]—made a way leading to earth, or possibly to a place below the earth. I have little doubt that the Galaxy was thought to be a bridge of the same kind. The Galaxy was the divine counterpart of some of the greatest of the Roman roads on earth, which roads were themselves esteemed by the Teutons who knew them and knew not their origin, things half divine. Thus the Roman name for these roads, *stratæ*, was transferred to the galaxy, which was known as Watling Street, Irming Street, Iring Street.[2]

The spot at which this heavenly bridge touched the earth—generally, so far as can be gathered, thought of as either in the north or west—was a *stead* or holy place. Thither, according to the Eddas, the gods used to ride each day over *Ásbrú* to hold council; much as the elders of the village or state might retire to the glades of the forest, their own thing-stead. According to some accounts, in the midst of this divine thing-stead, stood the fountain of Weird,[3] that is, of Death. Wherefore in one

[1] *Ásbrú* in the Eddas, or *Bilröst*, *Bifröst*.

[2] Cf. Widukind, i. 13 (P. iii. 424), and Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* p. 235 (tr. Stalybrass).

[3] *Urðar-brunnr*, Edda.

aspect of it the divine thing-stead is seen to lie in the 'other' world. No mythologies, however, make very clear distinctions between the borders of the actual world and what we call the 'other' world. This 'holy place' of the gods must likewise be the same place which many of the northern traditions speak of as *Oddinsakr*, the Acre, the Field, of the Immortals, the Elysian Fields of the North. It is also known as the Glittering Fields.[1]

This myth is not Scandinavian simply, not even Teutonic alone, but may be a universal Aryan one. For this glittering bright immortal region is none other than the 'Land beyond the North Wind,' the land of the Hyperboreans of which Homer knew. We might, however, take a different view of the connection, and suppose that the myth of the Hyperboreans itself was imported by the Greeks from some northern source; in the same way that it has been thought they imported the myth of the Phæacians, the ferriers of the dead, from the region whence Procopius in a much later age got his myth of Brittia.

And as we have been again brought face to face with Procopius' story, I cannot omit to point out that many of the accounts of *Oddinsakr* and the *Glittering Land* show us some portion thereof fenced off by a *wall* in such a way that the region beyond the wall is of a wholly different character from that on this side; so that the mortal who visits this land of the Immortals and comes back to tell the tale has yet never been allowed to pass beyond the wall. I think it is quite possible that this feature has been imported from the land *extremum pandit qua Gallia littus*, and from the 'Brittia' myth. It would be quite natural for such a legend to pass from Gauls to Germans; and if that has been the case here, this myth of the Hyperborean Paradise must be as distinctly German as Scandinavian.

Or say especially a possession of the Germans of North Germany. I do not think there is anything strange in men fixing upon the North, though it is the home of frost and snow,

[1] *Glæsisvellir*. This name answers, more or less, to the glass mountain of our fairy tales. It was a Celtic belief also. See Grimm, *D. M.*

for the site of this Earthly Paradise. Nobody can think this strange who remembers what the northern summer is like; who has seen the red sunset glow brooding in the north till it is subdued by the silvery approach of dawn, has seen the twilight linger in these lands all night, strong enough, as Tacitus wrote, to dim the light of the stars.

In the north, as Tacitus likewise says, was thought to lie the home of the sun. Sun (*Sol, Sonne*) is in the German languages a woman. In the Scandinavian mythology Sol flees all day before the sun-devouring wolf (Eclipse). She is only safe when she reaches the wood of the Varns, at the beginning of the underworld. There Billing and the other elves of the sunset meet her with kindled torches, which throw their reflection upon the sky. Billing is the watchman of the western edge of the Odáinsakr, and Delling, the Elf of Dawn, of the eastern edge, and we may consider this Paradise in the North either as on the outward rim of this world or the entrance of another. Such is the summer picture of the Other World.

But change the scene from summer to winter, and we have a still more impressive image. Now the Other World is the land of Giants; and this is the picture which is the most consistent with the whole cosmology of the Eddas, and, on that account we may believe, even more deeply rooted in the consciousness of the German people than the conception of the Earthly Paradise. With this cold region, *Jötunheimar*, are naturally far more nearly associated all ideas of Death, such as of Weird and her fountain, than with the summer land above spoken of. All that is strange and fearful, all images of pain and horror, will always be gathered together and poured into the mould of that one awful conception—Death. What gives its character to the mythology of the north—of all the Baltic regions—is that nature supplies the substance of these pictures in such large measure.

In the Norse mythology the habitable world (*Mannheimar*, man's home) is conceived as an island, containing, no doubt, its proper complement of inland seas, with their viks and

islands, of which the safe, familiar Baltic made one. But outside of all flowed that sea which Tacitus heard of, the sea, thick and almost stagnant, 'which we may believe girdles the whole earth.' This sea is in Norse mythology called the Sea of the Élivágar, the venom-cold waves.[1] It is like Ωκεάνος, 'a shadowy sea, a sea calamitous.' 'Bold must he be,' says the Edda, 'who strives to pass *those* waters.' Somewhere, far in the North, this ocean contains a *maelstrom*, whereby boats may be sucked down under the waves and landed in some out-world or under-world region. This maelstrom, too (it is *the* maelstrom of the Luffodens, no doubt, only exaggerated by the lens of mythology), is conceived as a sort of primeval fount whirling up 'at once and ever' the source of all seas which fill the world. Somewhere down beneath it is an immense world-mill revolving round and round, and churning up this primeval fount, called Hvergelmir, while its handle moves the disk of the heaven and the stars which turn therewith.[2]

Beyond the sea of the Élivágar lies *Jötunheimar*. And when we have got there we have got not only to the borders of the earth, but to (or beyond) the borders of *Helheimar*, the abode of ghosts. And what shows that Jötunheim extended into Helheim is that the giants (*jötnar*) and monsters (*thursar*) who inhabit Jötunheim seem to divide themselves into two classes—one, of which the names show them to be personifications of natural forces, the other whose names show them personifications of Death.

There is a passage in the Edda poetry where a certain King Heidrek is represented asking riddles of a wise man—Odin, or some other. One of the riddles is:

[1] We may remember in reading the account of the Élivágar, Pytheas' description of the sea beyond Thule, and the shapes (ice-floes?) to be seen therein. The *élivágar* are said to lie 'at the end of heaven' (on the horizon). *Hymisk.* l. 17 (*C. P. B.*).

[2] I do not suppose that Hvergelmir was originally anything different from Urd's well. And I doubt if the slaves of the world-mill were originally different from the Norns who guarded Urd's well. Rydberg distinguishes three different founts in the lower-world.

'Who is the Huge One who walks over the sea and land devouring the hills; who fears the Wind but no man, and makes war upon the Sun?'

The answer to the riddle is 'Fog.' The sentence, however, might stand for an exact description of the typical nature-giant in the Edda. These giants, one and all, make war successfully upon the sun in the person of Baldr; they fear no man, but they fear the Wind, who is Odin, and still more the Thunder, Thor. They are, in fact, the impersonations of the frost and the rime; and the rime is the mist or fog of frost. Their names show how completely they are the embodiments of nature. Collectively they are Hrimthursar, Rime-Giants. Individually they are called Hrim, Hrimgrim, and so forth. Fantastic as they are to us, they were very real to our far ancestors. The being who stalked at night under the misty hills and feared the Wind, had in the morning left behind him the token of his presence in the rime on blade and bough. *Þa met þæm mycel mist on se* says even our English Chronicle, describing a Viking expedition. Not 'they met,' but 'there met them,' a great Fog on sea. Naturally these beings of the frost and fog belong more to the Northern mythology than elsewhere; but they were—the whole giant race was—a common heirloom of Teutonic belief.

One fact alone shall suffice us as evidence both that the giant-race was as much a part of German mythology as of Scandinavian, and that it excited a very real terror in the popular mind. It is this: that the Huns (Magyars), who during the tenth century swept over Germany and gave that country the most terrible experience of barbarian invasion which since she became a portion of Christendom she had ever known or was to know, have usurped in popular mythology the place of the ancient *Eotan* race. Usurped it very unfittingly no doubt in fact, whereby the huge bones of fossil animals are ascribed in folk-lore to the small, swarthy Turcoman horsemen; but very appropriately to the lessons of mythology, if we remember what a devastating horde they were, deserving to be called the children of witches and were-wolves, like their predecessors,

Jordanes' Huns, the exact antithesis of all the children of light.

After the frost and snow giants we come to those who represent not physical cold, but the cold and numbness of the tomb; or to others who, to use Elia's words, speak not of a 'privation' only, but a 'more awful and confounding positive.' We have already spoken of one giant called Hræsvelg, corpse-devourer. He sits by the corpse (*nár-*) gates on corpse-strand (*nár-strönd*). Many of those who, in the (late) Eddaic mythology, appear as giants, having no special character (or even as ordinary mortals), prove, when we can hunt up some earlier myth about them, to be chthonic beings. We have already mentioned one instance in point—Geirröð in the Edda, who is Geruthus, a king of the under-world, in Saxo. Utgarðloki who, in the Gylfaginning,[1] is simply the owner of a giant city in *Jötunheim*, appears in Saxo as Utgarthilocus, a king of the dead. It is evident that many parts of the Eddaic mythology instead of being newly invented have decayed from their primitive condition.

Scrutinized in this manner the northern mythology soon shows us how large a horizon was occupied in popular belief by the other world and its inhabitants. We find for, example, that almost all the chief gods, and most of the chief Eddaic heroes, made at one time of their lives a descent to the under-world. Balder, the sun god, went down, alas! never to return. Frey, his counterpart, went down in the person of his messenger, and other self, Skirnir (the Shiner).[2] He, indeed, came back; but he left below the most precious of his possessions, his sword; and the loss of that was one day to prove his own destruction. Thorr went to hell, when he journeyed to the city of Utgarðloki. Odin descended thither after he had hung nine days on the gallows-tree; in another myth, he descended in the person of his messenger, and *his* other self, Hermóðr (War-fury).[3] Surely in no other myth-system do

[1] The first portion of the Edda Snorra or Younger Edda.
[2] Clearly only a by-name of Frey.
[3] In the Vegtamskviða, Odin in person rides to hell.

the gods stand in such close relation to the kingdom of death.

Nor is this ambition of visiting the world of shades confined to the gods. It is shared by those half-divine heroes whose legends form an integral portion of the corpus of northern mythology. Sigurd (Sigröd), when he awoke Brynhild-Sigrdrífa out of her death-sleep, or urged his horse, Grani, through the flames which surrounded her hall, was in reality performing an Orphean task—he was visiting his beloved in the underworld. Another poem gives a description of Brynhild's ride down to hell; though this is a late and rather dubious authority. There are other heroes, such as Helgi, who, having been dead, are summoned from their 'how,' or funeral mound, by the incantations of the spæ-woman—the Valkyria—whom they had had to wife.

This instance brings us to another aspect of the relations between *Mannheim* and *Helheim*—the power of necromancy, of conjuring the dead to come out of their tombs. Such powers belong, it need not be said, to all systems of magic; and I do not know that the employment of them was a specially common feature in the northern magic. Still there are many instances of such employment, and in combination with the myths of *Jötunheimar* and *Helheimar*, they help us to form a picture of the popular beliefs concerning the other world.

Out of all these sources it would be possible to draw a picture tolerably consistent with itself of the underground homes of the dead, of places of punishment and of happiness, of the homes of the primitive earth-powers, the beings who attend to the growth of nature and the nourishment of the world-tree, of the beings of decay and death, of frost and cold.[1]

[1] Rydberg has undertaken the task of drawing such a complete picture, and accomplished it on the whole with striking success; so at least it seems to me. See *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 209–494. This is the most important portion of Mr. Victor Rydberg's work (*Undersokningar i Germanisk Mythologi*). It is to be regretted that this author should mar the effect of great research and great acumen, by the occasional display of what might

But any such detailed account would be not only far beyond the compass of this chapter, it would be very inappropriate to a description of the ancestral beliefs of the Teutonic races. Such a picture as that must partake of all the elements out of which the Eddaic mythology is made up. It must contain many things borrowed from Christian eschatology, many more which, though they existed before the contact with Christendom, have been unduly emphasized owing to that contact; while in aiming at a picture of primitive belief we must content ourselves with notions very ill-defined, with what could by no means be always moulded into a consistent whole, in a word with images which impressed the popular imagination, which it could not rid itself of, but which it was generally unwilling to dwell upon at length, and never thought of shaping into a single system. This popular and persistent imagery of the other world will be that which alone has the power of securing for itself a lasting place in the popular mythology.

Not the least impressive among the images which answer to this test is that of the wall of flame, which constantly appears surrounding the House of Death. Now it appears as a ring of fire which encircles the whole of *Jötunheimar*, now it encloses some particular house within those precincts; that house or castle being for the moment the representative of the whole region, being in fact the House of Death.

In the simplest of sun-myths to be found in the Edda, that which tells the story of Frey's descent to Jötunheim in the person of Swipdag, Dayswoop, Daybreak, we have a characteristic and

almost appear a disingenuous ingenuity. As, for example, when he selects four lines out of a series in Havamál—

> Veiztu hve biðja skal, veiztu hve blóta skal?
> Betra es obeðit an sé of blótið, &c.

—as evidence of a ritualist war between the Æsir-worshippers and the Vanir-worshippers. Or when he makes a verse out of the same poem (43), whose meaning is perfectly simple and clear, carry a forced reference to the making of man and woman out of *Askr* and *Embla*.

impressive picture of this fiery wall. Daybreak[1] says, as he approaches the giant warder of the courts of Menglöd :—

> What monster is it before the forecourt standing,
> And hovering round the burning flame.

And later on, when he asks the guardian the name of the hall, he says :—

> How name they this hall that is girt round
> With a certain flickering flame.[2]

And in like manner Frey's messenger, Skirnir, before setting out to Jötunheim, says to his master :—

> Give me thy steed, then, that he may bear me through
> The mirk flickering flame.

In truth this expression, 'flickering flame' (vafrlogi), turns out to be applied especially to the flame which surrounds the other world.

Among a people by whom the pyre was the recognized means of departure from this world to the next[3] the funeral flame would naturally (nay, inevitably) be translated into the image of an actual wall of fire surrounding the Halls of Death. But then this mythic image might very well be enforced by a natural one.

Let us remember that Jötunheim, beside being the forecourt of the other world, is likewise an embodiment of winter, the winter aspect of the north, just as the Earthly Paradise, the Odáinsakr, is its summer aspect. As over one the light of the sunset lingered long enough to dim the light of the stars, or, if you will, as the torches of Billing and Delling, the elves of twilight and the dawn, sent up their reflection upon the sky all through

[1] Swipdag is really rather a god of spring than of daybreak. 'Windcold,' he says, 'is my name. My father was Springcold, his father Hardcold.'

[2] *Corp. Poet. Bor.*, 'Swipday and Menglad,' vv. 17 and 47 (=Fjölsvinnsm., 1 and 31).

[3] For a piece of evidence on the importance which at one time the northern nations attached to cremation, compare an interesting passage in Ibn Haukal's *Kitáb el-Meshálik wa-l-Memálik* (Travels in Russia).

the night, so in winter another light may be seen to surround the northern sky, a light to which the expressions 'flickering flame,' and 'mirk flickering flame' are peculiarly appropriate, the *Aurora Borealis*, the 'dawn of the north.'[1]

This, I think, completes the tale of the physical phenomena, out of which the northern people composed their mythic world of death. The unknown northern seas with their ice-floes, the *Élivogs*, and their maelstrom (*Hvergelmir*); the lands of perpetual ice and snow far in the north; the *Aurora Borealis* shining over all with its pale or ruddy wavering gleam. And if it be said that the materials for this picture could not have belonged in equal measure to the Germans of Germany I will grant it: not in *equal* measure, but in no small measure. For the Aurora Borealis is certainly often seen in Northern Germay; and Northern Germany has its full share of frost and fog and snow. Besides which it *may be* that the nations of Northern Germany had really come out of the north, and it certainly was the case that they had much closer relations therewith in prehistoric days than afterwards,[2] and believed themselves to have sprung thence.

It now remains to select from the Edda poems some passages which may present in a vivid shape the picture of the Death Kingdom, as I have tried to draw it.

We have said that the *Vafrlogi* is not a physical phenomenon only; that it belongs, so to say, to the dead, to the tomb. We need not, therefore, be surprised to meet it even when we are only concerned with the summoning of a dead man out of his 'how,' not with a journey from this world into the next. We find it, for example, in the summoning of Agantyr by his daughter Hervör. Nothing in literature is more weird and impressive

[1] In modern Icelandic *vafrlogi* is used for the *ignis fatuus* (see Vigfusson Dict. s. v.). And this modern use certainly points much more to the Aurora Borealis than to the lightning, which is what Rydberg interprets the vafrlogi to be.

[2] See in this connection a very striking note on two runes of the Tune-stone inscription in *Corp. Poet. Bor.*, i. 572. I do not pretend, of course, to declare how far Vigfusson's reading, which differs from the readings of Wimmer and Bugge, is supported by the facts.

than the picture of the fire breaking out on every side (a mystic, not a consuming fire) while the incantations are being chanted and the dead comes to life—

Fires are flickering, graves are gaping;
Burn fold and fen.
Be not we affrighted at such moanings,
Though on all sides the island burns.
Ajar lies hell-gate, the 'how' is opened,
Fire I behold all round the island.

Then follows an awful conjuration of the dead, and Agantyr speaks from his tomb.

Not less impressive is the story of Helgi and Sigrun, wherein the dead warrior rides forth from his tomb to meet his wife. But we do not get here any precisely new image connected with death.

These accounts lead us on to other myths in which one who is dead is awakened by a visit paid not to the tomb on earth, but to the House of the Dead below the earth. In the story of Sigrdrífa and Sigurd the act is told metaphorically. Sigrdrífa, who has offended Odin, has been pricked by a sleep-thorn. That really means that she is dead. Sigurd has to rescue her out of a hall round which burns a wall of flame. He had already heard birds prophesying this deed. One said:—

A hall is on high Hindarfjall;
With fire without 'tis all surrounded.
Mighty lords that palace builded
Of undimmed earth-flame.[1]
I know that on the fell a war maiden sleeps,
Around her flickers the linden's bane,[2]
With his sleep-thorn Odin has pierced the maiden,
Who the God's chosen dared in battle to bring low.

Then there are other accounts which give us the actual journey to the under-world. This is a region so closely associated with thoughts of mist and darkness that even the time for making the journey is generally night (as people

[1] Gold. [2] Fire.

generally die in the night). Skirnir, for example, after he has (in the passage quoted above) begged of Frey his horse, addresses that horse in the following words :—

Dark it grows without, time it is to fare,
Over the misty fells,
Over thursar-land.
We will both return, or that all-powerful jötun
Shall seize us both.

And then we follow the details of the journey a little further. Generally the traveller has to pass along a continually darking road which for days—nine days—leads onward to the lower-world. Fearful monsters try and affright him, hell-hounds, guardians of that land. When he has reached the entrance to the city of Hel he finds at the gate a Völva's grave. Such is the picture given of Odin's hell-journey in the *Vegtamskviða*.

Downward he rode toward Niflhel,
Then met him the hell-hound from its cave coming,
Bloody it was upon its breast,
And it bayed and gaped wide
At the sire of runic songs.

Onward rode Odin, the earth echoed,
Till to the high Hel's house he came;
Then rode the god to the eastern gate,
Where he knew there was a Völva's grave;
To the wise one began he his charms to chant,
Till she uprose a-force and the dead one spake—

'Say what man and men to me unknown,
Trouble has made for me and my rest destroyed;
Snow has snowed o'er me; rain has rained upon me;
Dew has bedewed me, I have long been dead.'

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTENDOM.

I.

We have not in the case of Christendom a task before us like that with which we were confronted in the last chapter—the task of determining a creed's foundation and its earliest form. The materials for doing this for Christianity are in the hands of every one; and though it cannot be said that every one is agreed as to the conclusions to be drawn therefrom, the discussion of such controversial questions lies, fortunately, quite outside the sphere of our present study.

Unless, indeed, it be reckoned a point of controversy to maintain that Christianity has never changed since its first foundation. That is a problem which, speaking from an historical standpoint, it would be impossible to admit. We have not to say whether the *germs* of the later creeds do or do not lie in the most primitive Christianity. Whether, for example, the text 'This is my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins' would or would not legitimately develop into the elaborate and mystical (or magical) rites and beliefs of mediæval Catholicism; whether the text 'There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife and children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time and in the world to

come life everlasting,' was designed to foster the practice of monachism; or even whether the words 'I am not come to send peace into the world but a sword,' do or do not present a quasi-sanction for religious wars and religious persecutions. These are not matters on which we have to speak.

But we have to reckon with the fact that there are three elements in the later Catholicism pointed at in the last sentence, viz., the growth of dogma leading to persecution, the growth of monasticism, and the growth of the sacramental doctrine, which can be as legitimately made the subjects of historical inquiry as can any other human developments about which there exists no special theory of prescription. To the historian studying the history of these growths of belief, it is a matter of very secondary importance whether a sanction for them can be found in the writings of this or that father, in the decrees of this or that council of the Church. He recognizes—that is to say, if he is at all fitted to be the historian of ideas—that Belief, like all things spiritual, is not to be expressed in set formulas nor sealed up in the tightest of decrees or articles; that it is little affected by the form of words to which a particular body of individuals may consent to append their signatures; that the belief of any age is nothing more than the sum of the individual opinions of that age, with only this proviso—that the opinion in every case is one on which its possessor is prepared to act. And therefore for a history of Christian or of any other belief he seeks for a hundred indications, in popular art, popular legend, familiar literature and correspondence, at least as important for his study as legal formulæ or the decrees of councils.

In three directions, it has been already said (and, indeed, the fact is generally recognized), does the development of mediæval Catholicism chiefly display itself; towards dogma and persecution; towards monasticism; towards mysteries and orders. Using another image, we might call these the three pillars on which all that is especially characteristic of mediæval Catholicism rests. And in the raising up of these three pillars there are necessarily certain epochs specially memorable. One—the

first, perhaps—of these is the conversion of Constantine. It is not alone the acceptance of Christianity as the state religion which gives importance to that event; but the evidence which it incidentally brings to light of the extent to which the new creed had been preparing itself for that consummation, the readiness or even alacrity which it displayed to accept a kingdom which *was* of this world, under the accompanying conditions. As Milman says, the story of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the conversion of the Emperor is pre-eminently significant for the eagerness which it shows on the part of the Christians to receive the account of a miracle, whose express purpose was to convert the symbol of the Peace of God into an ensign of war. 'It was the first advance to the military Christianity of the Middle Ages.'[1]

The quarrel of the Donatists followed close upon the *establishment* of the Church and foreshadowed all the future intestine struggles of the Christians. It is noticeable, however, that we find both parties in this brief but sanguinary struggle citing for the warrant of their persecutions the authority of the Old Testament rather than of the New; as so many persecutors have done throughout succeeding ages.

After the Donatist disputes followed the great Trinitarian controversy, in which Christianity entered upon a new phase. The struggle between the Arians and Athanasians occupied the attention of the Church for many succeeding generations, and she was in this condition of self-absorbtion when the Roman Empire began to shake and totter before the onslaughts of the barbarians. One effect of this condition of things, which is of extreme importance for our subject, was that the first contact of Christianity and Teutonic heathenism drew to itself little attention by comparison with the incidents of the Trinitarian warfare. That controversy, especially after it has degenerated into one between the Catholics and semi-Arians, the struggle over the Homoiousion and Homoousion, seems at the first glance to modern eyes pitiful enough. But I do not think it was so in reality. Of course, the subtle distinction between

[1] *Hist. of Christ.* (1840), ii. 354–5.

'of the same substance or being' (*Ousia*), or 'of like substance,' would be for the vast majority of Christians an academic question only; such, too, I venture to think, has always been for the great mass of Christians the nature, or even the existence, of the Third Person of the Trinity. But not so with the individuality of Christ Himself. The real question which had to be decided—I mean for the popular mind—was *who* should be the Deity of the Middle Ages—Christ, some abstract metaphysical god, or the Jehovah of Judaism. Mankind had advanced to the height of monotheism. Other deities might exist, deities of limited powers like the gods of paganism or heathendom. These only changed their names and became the angels or the saints of the Church; angels or δαίμονες in the earlier centuries, and in Gnosticism and Manichæism; saints, chiefly, in the Middle Ages properly so called. But over all these gods of polytheism ruled, in place of the controlling Fate of the classic drama, a controlling Providence. The question which had to be decided, and which Christianity decided triumphantly in its own sense, was whether Christ or some other was to represent this Providence.

Art displays the triumph of the cause, and in doing so shows how much popular religion was concerned in it. The Christ of the Catacombs—we all know that youthful, Apollo-like, but essentially human figure, or another similar one, the 'Good Shepherd,' copied from the Hermes Kriophoros of Græco-Roman art. But the Christ of a few centuries later is a severe god, the Creator of the Earth and Heaven, and the Judge at the Day of Doom.[1] Such He continued to be throughout the Middle Ages: at the dawn of the Renaissance the First Person of the Trinity begins to take His proper place. And when we remember how much devotion there was throughout the Middle Ages to the person of Christ, who was looked upon sometimes as a kind of feudal prince; when we recall the saying of Clovis, 'If I had been there with my Franks, I would have avenged

[1] *Cf.* Didron, *Iconog. Chrét.* (1843), pp. 239, 899. The habit of bowing in church exclusively at the name of Christ is of course (as this author notes) another item of evidence in the same direction.

His wrongs,'[1] or read that earliest of German religious poems, the (so-called) *Heliand* wherein Christ appears somewhat in the guise of a Saxon prince, we see how much influence the Trinitarian controversy had upon the future relations of Heathendom and Christendom.

In one form or another the Trinitarian controversy, we have said, absorbed the attention of Christendom for many centuries. When it finally died down it left Christianity subject to fresh influences; and, to a certain extent, it left behind it a new Christianity, a Christian world reconstituted by the addition of the barbarian element. After the death of Arianism and those minor heresies which were its offspring, the influences which worked most powerfully upon the creed of Christendom came from below rather than from above; not so much from the teaching of Heresiarchs or Doctors of the Church as from popular beliefs and popular superstitions. These subtle and popular movements were due, I take it, in great measure, to the survival of Paganism and Heathendom among the people of Mediæval Christendom.

II.

During all these years had been coming into effect an immense change in the *personnel* of the Christian community, due to the introduction of monasticism; certainly the most momentous change in that kind since orders and the laying on of hands first became general among Christians. The commonly-accepted opinion, says Montalembert,[2] fixes the date of the regular constitution of the monastic order at the end of the third century—contemporarily, therefore, with the establishment of Christianity as a state religion, a century before the influx of the barbarians.

How Christian monasticism took its rise in Egypt, in the Thebaid, we know. Into what is known or surmised of its connection with an earlier pre-Christian eremitism—Jewish of the Essenes, or possibly even Hindu of the gymnosophists—

[1] Fredegarius *Epit.* c. 21.

[2] *Moines d'Occident*, l. ii.

we need not inquire. Its natural course was from eremitism to cœnobitism—from the solitary existence of the hermit to that of the religious community. Men fled at first singly into the desert. Some hermit of exceptional piety became famous; disciples and imitators flocked to his neighbourhood; sometimes he let them abide there uncared for, more often he consented to take in one way or another the direction of their life; and thus the germ of a cœnobitic society took shape. Others, again, we behold departing into the desert or to some spot rich in holy associations, with the express object of gathering comrades round them and forming a community for prayer and praise. Numerous are the names celebrated, or at least commemorated, as the furtherers of the new movement in the various lands of Christendom. But two stand out above the rest in popular fame, and are thus familiar to us in art—Anthony and Jerome—Anthony the typical hermit, Jerome the typical cœnobite.

The spread of monachism did not long precede what is for our study the great event of the age—the beginning of the barbarian invasions. It may help us to fix a date to recall how the news of the fall of Rome before the arms of Alaric—that awful event which seemed to shake the ashes of Roman patriotism in its grave—reached Jerome as he was presiding over his monastic community at Bethlehem, and inspired Augustine with the thoughts which germinated in the *City of God*. The part which Anthony took in the Donatist troubles reminds us, on the other hand, that with the beginnings of the monastic institution are associated the last persecutions of Christianity at the hands of paganism, and, following almost immediately upon them, the first persecutions within the pale of Christendom. A.D. 410.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to remind the reader how altogether outside the established orders of the Church lay monasticism at its foundation; so that for long the monk was not even a priest. The rule of St. Benedict—ultimately *the* rule for the communities of Europe—provided that one or two monks in each monastery should be consecrated priests, in

order that the services might be duly performed without external aid; and it was rare (at first) to find any monk who sought, as we should say, 'promotion' in the Church. Times had long greatly changed before we read of Archbishop Odo, of Canterbury, that he was the *first* archbishop who had not previously been a monk.[1] It may, I say, be unnecessary to remind the reader of this; but the fact is important, in view of the growth of that Sacramental doctrine which we took as the third of the great pillars upon which rested the belief of Mediæval Christianity.

The East, the region of deserts—the East and Africa—were the natural birthplaces for the spirit of eremitism, and therefore of monasticism. But it was not long before the movement spread from Africa and the East to Europe. Among the earliest sites which it chose out (naturally enough) were the countless islands of the Mediterranean; and thus what the lonely waste of sand expressed for the oriental monk, that the boundless expanse of water symbolized to his brother monk in Europe—his aloofness from human affairs, his loneliness with God.

But there were solitary places enough on the mainlands, deep forest tracts and lonely mountain tops. Before Benedict had come to Monte Cassino to lay the foundations of what may be called the orthodox monasticism of the West, the institution had already spread through Gaul to Britain. Hilary of Poictiers, Martin of Tours (more strictly of Marmoutiers, near Tours), are the names most associated with the spread of the institution in Gaul; Martin's name pre-eminently so. After this saint was christened one of the most distinguished among the early foundations in this country, Candida Casa, or Whithern, on the Solway Bay.[2] That one legend made it the school of Patrick shows at least the veneration in which was held this eldest child of Gaulish monasticism.[3]

[1] *Vita S. Oswaldi* in *Lives of the Archbishops of York*. Raine (Rolls Ser.). [2] Beda, *H. E.* iii. 4.

[3] On its relation to Irish monasticism, see Skene, *Celt. Scotl.* ii. 46.

In this wise—to go back to the image with which this volume opens—we see the march of this new social and religious force following close upon the heels of Christianity itself, and travelling along the routes which the Roman Empire had prepared for it; and we see, almost at the same moment, the German barbarians stepping in from the East.

III.

It was about the time attributed to the coming of the Angles and Saxons into Britain—in those suspicious three keels which figure so often in Teutonic legend—that the Roman-Armorican Patricius began his great mission in Ireland; and as in the eastern British island the sphere of Christianity was being continually narrowed by the conquests of the heathen, new territory was being gained for it in the western.[1] After the settlement of the Angles and Saxons a broad belt of Teutons was spread between all the Celtic people in the British Islands and their brethren on the Continent. For some time, too, a belt of heathenism separated in the same way the Christians of Britain, of Caledonia, and Hibernia, from the main body of their co-religionists; so that they may have been half-forgotten by the rest of the Christian world; nothing on this side of them but unconverted barbarians, nothing beyond them but, as a Greek would have said, the deep-flowing stream of Ocean and the dark groves of Persephone. But in the course of time there arose that beacon of the West, Columba, who lit up such a flame of piety and learning in Ireland that the light of it shone out over all Western Europe.

A.D. circ. 427.

A.D. 527.

[1] St. Patrick was born A.D. 373, which is, by the way, about the date of the establishment of Ermanrik's empire in Russia. His *first* mission to Ireland fell probably about A.D. 397; but his great mission not till after 427. He died *circ.* 463. He was not, of course, the first Christian missionary to the Irish (Scots), but the first who made any sensible impression: *his* death, even, was followed by a partial apostacy among the Irish Christians.

The monasticism of Ireland drew its inspiration from Africa, from the eremites of the Thebaid; or, if with any European intermediary, from the monks of the islands, before the establishment of Benedict's reformed monastery on Monte Cassino. We might, not too fancifully, I think, call the two European orders that of the sea and that of the mountains. To the monks of the sea belonged mystic piety, free speculation, a measure of physical sloth; to the monks of the mountains, severity, order, and rigid obedience. In the matter of obedience, however, Columba effected a great improvement among his own brethren. The Irish monks gathered themselves more strictly into religious communities, and adopted a rule which was in the main the rule of St. Columba. I guard myself from calling these new establishments religious *houses*; for such they were not. They were no more than groups of wooden huts—no Irish shanty of to-day so small as they were—each for its single occupant.[1] It was a group of hermits carrying, snail-like, their cells with them; the same had been the growth of religious communities in the Thebaid. 'Let a narrow place with one door contain them,' ran the rule of St. Columba. The whole group was girt round with a slight defensive *vallum*, or mud wall. In the midst stood a small oratory containing a shrine, with the relics, it may be, of some saintly founder. The oratories were at first called *duirtech*, or *dairtech*, houses of wood (oak).[2] Later on they became houses of stone, and a stone belfry was added. Such was the Irish monastery of Columba's day, the *foyer* of so much that influenced the future history of Christendom.

Before long these monasteries gained a great veneration from the religious-superstitious Hibernians. The more famous became in the midst of a poor population the storehouses of precious gifts in gold and silver and jewels, in that fine twisted work which is so characteristic of the goldsmith's art in Ireland.

[1] Skene, *Celt. Scotl.*, ii. 57, and Adamnan, *Vita S. Columbæ*, Bks. i., ii. Stone cells for anchorites were not, however, unknown, and it is not probable that such were unknown in the monasteries. *Cf. Celt. Sc.*, ii. 70.

[2] This etymology of *dairtech* is not certain.

And this treasure proved their own destruction in after-years, when the Vikings came.

I know not whether it was any survival from the traditions of the far-off founders of their order, but certain it is that Columba and the great institutors of monasteries in his day chose still to build by the side of the water—on some one of the countless islands off the Irish coast or in the lakes, or upon some promontory overlooking the sea.[1] Such a habit served to mark the distinction between their life, the religious life of Ireland, and the secular life. For the latter had in those days little connection with the sea. The ports which Ireland has she owes to the Vikings. Now her capital cities, Dublin, Belfast, Cork, are at these ports. Then the capital, Tara, was inland, in the 'Middle Kingdom,' so-called.[2] The site of Dublin was then only the Black Pool, or the Ford of the Hurdles.[3] There was no commerce, there were no ports in those days. There was fishing, of course, for which the rude skin-covered wicker coracles sufficed; and these boats were presently, as we shall see, made use of by another kind of fishers, fishers of men.

There was thus a natural fitness in this uprearing of monasteries as near as might be to the edge of all secular life. And for those which looked out westward or to the north, there must, as one fancies, have been an unending fascination in gazing nightly toward the gates of the setting sun and the doors of Paradise.

One of the most famous of the Irish monastic foundations was Bangor, on the coast of County Down. It was the foundation of Comgall, the friend of Columba: Columba himself had lived there. From it came those two great missionaries

[1] 'The small islands round the coast or in the inland lochs appear to have possessed an irresistible attraction for the founders of these monasteries' (Skene, *o. c.* ii. 62).

[2] Meath, *Middhe* = 'Middle [Country].' Not, of course, that the kingdom of Meath was or is in the middle of *Ireland.*

[3] Dubh-linn = black pool [Blackpool, Liverpool]. The usual name for Dublin, when the Vikings first made a settlement there, was Ath-Cliath, 'the ford of the hurdles.'

to continental Europe, Columban and Gall. Tory Island, off the coast of Donegal, was a foundation of Columba's own. So was Derry, which amid its deep oak woods[1] had no outlook save towards the sea. The Arran islands had each its monastery: another, where the town of Limerick now stands—as a town Limerick was founded by the Vikings; many in Cork harbour, in Wexford harbour; one Columba's foundation, on Rechrea (now Lambey), off Dublin county. The inland lakes had their share. Five monasteries on the islands of Lough Ree alone—in Lough Neagh, Lough Corrib, Lough Derg, their due number. On the Shannon, midway between Lough Derg and Lough Ree, stood one of the most long and widely-famed of Irish monasteries, which, for the sake of its annals, the student of Irish history gratefully remembers—Clonmacnoise; St. Kieran was its patron, a contemporary of Columba.

Columba was not content with reforming the monasticism of his own country. His great achievement was the conversion of his monastic Church into a missionary Church. Driven out of his native land, he carried with him a community of monks to Hy—the place which we to-day miscall Iona—the small island lying alongside of Mull; a world-famous place, which through Columba became, as it were, the Delos of Western Christendom.

The roving spirit of the Irish fitted them for the missionary labours to which they were destined. In the half-mythic lives of the early Irish saints there are many histories of adventure by sea; and this, in spite of the rudeness of their art of ship-building, far behind what obtained upon the other side of the known world, the coasts of the Baltic. St. Bridget is said to have gone to Scotland, to Scotland proper, Scotland of the Scots, or Irish Scotland, as it might be called.[2] She passed, among other places, up the Kilbrennan Sound,[3] and there are many churches in Bute and Kintyre said to have been founded

[1] Derry=*Daire*, an oak wood.

[2] The name Scot being at that time the designation of an Irishman, not of a Scotchman.

[3] Sound of the Church of St. Brandan.

by her. But the most famous of all these mythic, or half-mythic voyages was that of St. Brandan, which grew and grew in mediæval legend till it became at last a sort of proto-Columbian voyage upon the Atlantic in search of the Earthly Paradise.[1]

But the great age of missionary achievement begins with Columba's foundation at Hy. **A.D. 563.**

South-eastern Scotland was in these days Pictish, and Christian after a fashion. This was no great territory; for the English conquests extended as far as the Forth. South-west Scotland, Argyllshire and the southern isles, were Christian too, and Scottish, that is to say Irish in their inhabitants. Southward this kingdom extended to the Clyde: beyond the Clyde lay the British kingdom of Strathclyde. To the north the boundary between this original Scotland and the land of the northern Picts was Lock Levin, the present boundary between Argyllshire and Inverness, to which Mull lies just opposite. Northern Pictland was still heathen; so that Columba had to the south of him co-religionists and kinsmen, but immediately to the north strangers and heathens.

What powers of persuasion and of menace lay in the preachings of that perfervid Scotchman with his stately presence and sonorous voice[2] we can only guess; for the romantic instinct of those days preferred to attribute to a miracle the slow results of human effort. The picturesque legend tells how Columba came to the capital of the heathen Pictish king, Brude Mac Mælchon. But the king would have none of him, and ordered the palace gates to be shut in the face of the missionaries. The saint stood up, with his two

[1] During St. Brandan's famous and fabulous voyage to the W. or N.W. he came, the legend says, to an island called the Island of Sheep. 'At last, by purveyance of God, they came to a fuld fayre ylonde ful of green pasture, wherein were the whytest and gretest shepe that ever hee saw' (*Golden Legend*, Wynkyn de Worde). This may have been the Faroes (*far eyar*—sheep islands): a summer picture, no doubt. Decuil (*De Mensura Orbis*) also notices the number of sheep on some of the islands of the far West in his day, A.D. 825.

[2] *Cf.* Adamnan, *Vita S. Col.* (Reeves) i. c. 29, and Reeves, note, p. 260.

disciples Comgall and Cennæth[1] beside him, and made a cross upon the doors. They at once flew open; and the king came forth trembling.[2] Henceforward the work of conversion went on apace, and the highlands often echoed to the voices of Columba and his followers.

Columba passed on, founding fresh monasteries all up the western coast of Scotland. His disciple Cormac carried his work further by the Christianization of the Orkneys. And wherever almost a new monastery was established, it, like its predecessors in Ireland and Scotland, was placed, if possible, upon an island, or upon the seashore close to the waves. The eremite spirit, the Theban spirit, was not dead, and some zealous and solitary souls chose out lone hermitages on barren rocks and preached to the fishes and sea-birds there.

It was in truth a wonderful life, this of the Irish monk, alone or in communion, in his narrow hut, looking out upon the eternal seas—to us an inconceivable life. We have to read some of their poems to guess how much they loved these pensive citadels of theirs, and how strongly nature in her wild aspects wrought upon them. 'Beloved'—says one such poem, called a poem of Columba, speaking of some of his foundations—

> Beloved are Durrow and Derry,
> Beloved is pure Raphoe,
> Beloved is Drumhome, the fruitful,
> Beloved are Swords and Kells;
> But sweeter and lovelier far
> The salt sea where the sea-gulls fly.[3]

Does this history seem to linger too long over the early foundations of the Irish Church? It is with an express purpose. I take the cream of all history to lie in the contrast between the changing activities of man brought face to face with the unchanged features of nature. And these contrasts arise not out of the lapse of time alone, but from difference of development. In the present case I have desired to bring into

[1] *Vita S. Comgall.* [2] Adamnan, *o. c.*, ii. 36.
[3] [redacted] also a longer and very beautiful poem quoted by Skene, *Celtic*

relief the contrasted pictures of two peoples dwelling by the sea—the Irish and Scottish monks in the far north-west, the Scandinavian nations in the far north-east. These typify for us a part of the manifold contrast between Heathendom and Christendom.

Let the reader, if he will, stand in fancy by the salt sea, where the sea-gulls fly, and watch the birds as they wing westward toward the setting sun, with the eye of an Irish monk, alone, untroubled, dreaming, and praying. And again let him watch the water-fowl—the *swans*, say—rising from the Viks of the Baltic in serried array, clanging through the air in Hamal's *fylking* far overhead, and flying southward: let him watch this sight with the eye of a Northman who is himself ere long to follow them upon their southward journey.

And this connection and contrast of the east and west is not fanciful nor arbitrary. For it so happens that while the Vikings were brought into some sort of relation with almost every country of Europe and with all kinds and degrees of Christians, their relations with the Irish monks were peculiar in kind and in degree, and in their results; as we shall see hereafter.

What arts might a man not know, what thoughts might he not think in this little world! He kept up his scholarship; read in Greek almost alone among the learned of Northern Europe; occupied himself in the beautiful gold and silver work, and still more beautiful illuminations which have come down to us from that age. The Irish art work is peculiar; its marked characteristics are the elaborate interlaced patterns which seem almost to defy human ingenuity to carry out their twists and windings. When you scrutinize them closely you find, moreover, that these patterns are made up of fantastic animals. It is a peculiarity which runs through Irish metal work and illumination alike, and is even imitated in a very inappropriate fashion on Irish stone carvings. Probably most readers are best acquainted with these last, especially on the crosses called Irish crosses, though they are found in other countries, notably in the Scandinavian. These interlaced patterns are probably derived in the first instance from the wattling of twigs

or reeds—and so with one hand they reach back to prehistoric art, in which *wattling*, or platting, was one of the earliest and most important industries.[1] But on the other hand this twisted scroll-work is the parent of the art which is characteristically Scandinavian. It was imported by the Vikings into the north, and has remained implanted in the Scandinavian countries up to the present day, though it has been abandoned elsewhere.[2]

Again the extraordinary prevalence of the animal forms in Irish art work touches some of the characteristics of Gothic architecture at a much later date; though in this case I am unable to say whether the connection is fortuitous or really that of parentage and descent.

The Irish monk speculated freely, and was far away from the control of Pope or Council. He saw strange visions, and this, too, was natural to one who lived so near the borders of the world.

IV.

Let us pause for a moment at this point to make surer our ground in the general history of Europe; for while these changes had been going on in a remote corner, events of world-wide importance had been transacted elsewhere. We have not, of course, to trace the history of these great events; but some of the epochs of that history, some of the dates belonging to it, may hold our attention for a moment.

What we have been chiefly concerned with hitherto has been the spread of the monastic movement, firstly in Europe, secondly in Ireland. It begins in Europe almost contemporaneously with the beginning of the barbarian invasions, that is at the end of the fourth century; St. Patrick's great mission

[1] *Wattle*, connected with the root vi (Skr. vê) in *vitis*, *vimen*, Slavonic *wetla*, a 'willow,' and Sansk. *vetra*, a reed. The number of the names of plants (for several more might be added) derived from the process of *wattling*, or *weaving*, indicates the importance of the process in prehistoric times. Of course *weaving* in prehistoric days was only platting.

[2] Some of the Irish work appears to have found its way into Scandinavia before the Viking Age began; see Montelius, *Sveriges Forntid.*

to Ireland falls about A.D. 427. Precisely a hundred years later was *born* Columba (527); A.D. 563 is the date of the foundation of the monastery at Hy. From A.D. 565 to 575 were the years spent in the conversion of the Picts. These are the dates for the Irish and Scottish Church: what of the great contemporary events in Europe?

We know that there are two great eras of the barbarian invasion of the Roman Empire: one that begins at the end of the fourth century; the other more nearly the end of the fifth. The *first* is the era of two great invasions, that of the Visi-Goths from the Lower Danube (A.D. 395–400), and that of the Suevi, Burgundians, Alani, Vandals into Gaul (A.D. 405) across the frozen Rhine. The *second* era is connected with the nations of the Ostro-Goths, and the Franks, with Theodoric's conquest of Italy, A.D. 493, and with Clovis's empire in Gaul, which begins with the victory gained over Syagrius at Soissons in A.D. 486.

A.D. 395.

A.D. 493.

A.D. 486.

Between these two eras lies the one which has such an especial interest for us, that of the settlement of the Angles and Saxons in Britian (from A.D. 449?). By comparing these dates we are in a position to see what was the relationship in time between the establishment of the Irish monastic Church and the course of Teutonic invasion of Europe.

Some only among these barbarian invasions were in the strict sense heathen invasions. For the conversion of the German nationalities had begun much earlier; and before they broke down the barrier of Roman power most of the incoming Teutonic peoples had abandoned the creed of their forefathers. Not much notice, as we have said, was taken in the midst of the Trinitarian controversy of the labours of the missionaries among the heathens. But one missionary at least, Ulfila, the apostle of the Goths, has left behind him his own memorial, a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί, in the gospels which he translated into the Gothic tongue.

From the Visigoths, the first invaders, while they were still half-unconverted, comes to us, moreover, one of the rare and slight

existing memorials of heathendom. Many of the Goths had already become Christians, but in their king (one of their two kings or judges), Athanaric, they possessed a stern upholder of the ancient faith. When Athanaric saw his people falling away to Christianity he began an active persecution of the converts. As a test of their conformity he sent round among the villages of the Visigoths a waggon bearing an idol; those who refused to worship it were burnt, along with their families. It cannot, I think, have been Odin, Thor, or Frey, or Balder, who was carried round in this wise; for we are told that the Teutons did not make images of these gods. It was more probably Nerthus. For as she, *si credere velis*, was herself bathed in a secret lake in the Baltic island, she must have had a corporeal presence. There must have been some image of her, however carefully it was kept concealed. And she was the one likely to be carried round from place to place among the people.

This persecution by Athanaric is a rare instance. As a rule the Germans passed over from their old creed to the new one without difficulty or noise, without preserving any *overt* memorials of the past: the ineradicable effects of centuries of belief they could not but preserve. It was not as heathens but as Arians that the Goths and Burgundians incurred the hatred of the subject Romans. The conversion of the early wanderers was all the easier because they were wanderers. Primitive creeds are so much attached to the soil; they depend so much upon local associations, upon groves wherein a Wodin has been born, upon islands where a Nerthus has her home. Mohammedanism has been a conquering creed, just on account of its pure monotheism, its slight association with objects of sense—such even as images or shrines. Mediæval Catholicism had far less power; and the very descendants of the servants and warriors of the Cross, when they had been settled a little while in Asia, relapsed into a sort of paganism.

But in return for their facile conversion, the Germans were allowed to import into Christianity no small part of the spirit of their ancient creed, and that peculiar growth, the chivalric

creed of the Middle Ages, was chiefly their creation; it from this time began to take shape and to transform Christianity. The fair Valkyriur were abandoned, and began to change into witches. Perhaps that story of the origin of the Huns was not a pure heathen invention, but due to the decline of the heathen wise-women in popular estimation. But the beliefs and sentiments which had fostered the worship of Nerthus and of the maidens of Wodin, were transferred to the mother of Christ; and from the fifth and sixth centuries the worship of the Virgin began to take a conspicuous place in the popular creed.[1]

As distinguished from the earliest barbarian invaders, or from all the Teutonic invaders in the South, the Franks and the Saxons came in as heathens. This was afterwards reckoned a happy circumstance by the Catholics; for Arianism had lost its power at the day of their conversion, and they were the first strong supporters which the Trinitarian party found among the barbarians.

To a certain extent, moreover, the Franks were predisposed to favour the Roman party in Gaul. The fatal habit of division among the German nationalities, which has so often paralyzed the effect of their victories, was beginning to be felt at the opening of the second era of conquest. The same influences which in the dawn of German history had turned Segestes against Arminius, or made Maroboduus hesitate between his countrymen and their enemies, now sent Theodoric, with the sanction of the emperor, to the overthrow of Odovacar, and Clovis, with the title of consul, against the Visigoths and Burgundians. Childaric, Clovis's father, was a friend of the Romans, and not ill-disposed to the Christian faith. St. Geneviève (Genoveva) wrought in his presence a miracle precisely similar to that which Columba a century later wrought before Brude Mac Mælchon. Childeric had ordered the gates of his palace, at Parisii, to be closed

[1] The Virgin is, on the contrary, never mentioned by St. Patrick in his extant sermons, see Whitley Stokes, *Tripartite Life* (Rolls Series), clxi.

against Geneviève, but the bolts flew back when the saint drew near.

Chlodowig carried on the schemes of his father for the founding of a Frankish power upon the subjection of the other Teutonic nationalities. So little was he *echt deutsch* at heart that he bethought him in his war with the Alamanni of invoking the power of the Romans' god against the gods of his forefathers.

A.D. 496. His prayer was followed by his victory of Tolbiac (Zülpich), and the result of that—an event of world-wide importance—was the baptism of Clovis himself and the greater part of the Frankish army.

When the turmoil of the two contemporary Teutonic conquests died down, the conquests of the Franks in Gaul, and of the English in Britain, the intercourse between the latter country and Continental Europe, which, when interrupted, had erased our island from the roll of the lands of the living and numbered it among the lands of the dead, was re-established once more. Intermarriages between the two ruling houses here and in Gaul—the house of Hengist and the house of Clovis—took place. Trade travelled once more along the Roman roads, and embarked from Roman port to Roman port. The earliest Saxon coinage, which we may date about the time of the marriage of King Ethelberht and Queen Berchta, shows unmistakable signs of having been imitated from the corresponding coinage of the Merovingians.[1] And as a result of intermarriage and of this renewed intercourse the

A.D. 597. creed of Rome, which had just one century before conquered the Franks, made with Augustine its first landing in *England*.

The poetry of the episode of the conversion of the English attaches itself more to the Church of Northumbria than to that of Kent; only, perhaps, because its *vates sacer* was a Northumbrian. Whatever of this history we forget, we are sure to retain the picture of King Eadwine, of Northumbria, driven out from his native land—in the true tradition of all those heroes

[1] *Catalogue of English Coins in the British Museum*, C. F. Keary, vol. i. pp. xi. *sqq*.

dearest to the Teutonic imagination—wandering forlornly from place to place, and dependent upon the precarious hospitality of whatever prince might venture to give him shelter; then as he hears of the intended treachery of his host, and yet in mere despair cannot bring himself to decide on any new plan, there appears to him in a vision a stranger in strange attire who tells him that his enemy is dead and gives him a secret sign by which he shall know the prophet again.[1] Not otherwise in many a heathen saga does Wodin the wanderer come to some favourite hero, and in the same way give him a secret token of his changed fortune. But this time, when Eadwine meets the subject of his vision in the flesh, he proves to be, not Wodin but the missionary Paulinus sent from Kent to Northumbria. This change in the personality of the Wise Old Man symbolizes the transition from heathenism to Christianity in the north.

So far reached the wave of conversion which came direct from Rome. But here it received a check. Christianity in Northumbria was for a while held back, much as the Christianity of Ulfila's preaching had been held in check by the fierce heathenism of Athanaric. The Athanaric of Heptarchic England was Penda, King of Mercia. He did not scruple to join forces with the enemies of his race, the Britons; and the united armies of Mercia and Strathclyde met the Northumbrians at Heathfield, where Eadwine was defeated and slain.[2] This was in 633. A date has no meaning in itself. But we may remember that it was just seventy years, two generations, since Columba had settled his community at Iona, and one generation after his death. It was ninety years after the *birth* of Columbanus, the great Irish missionary to Continental Europe; and ninety years, too, after the *death* of Benedict on Monte Cassino. That is the chronology of the event reckoned by the history of Western monasticism.

A.D. 633.

V.

The task of harrying Northumbria and slaying its Christian

[1] Beda, *H. E.*, ii. 12.

[2] Ibid., ii. 20.

A.D. 634. inhabitants fell rather to the Christian Ceadwalla than to Penda.[1] Soon a new ruler of Northumbria appeared, the son of Eadwine's ancient rival Æthelfrith the Fierce. This ruler, Oswald, was a Christian who had learnt his Christianity in the school of Iona. Northumbria had now almost fallen back into heathenism; but under Oswald's protection a new race of missionaries came into the kingdom from the north, and the great era of Columban monasticism in England began.[2] The wave which had flowed northward from Rome spent itself when Eadwine fell at Heathfield. The returning wave from the distant forgotten north began to flow into England, when Oswald brought Scottish Christianity back with him into Northumbria. Paganism, however, was not yet extinc ; and a second time the arms of Northumbria went down before those of Penda and his Mercians, and Oswald met his death at Maserfeld (Oswestry).[3] East Anglian Christianity, too, was for a while rooted out. Three kings of the East Angles fell in succession before Penda. At last, however,

A.D. 655. that champion of the ancient creed was himself defeated and slain by Oswiu, the brother and successor of Oswald.

And now the Columbian Church spread its influence unchecked through England. Aidan, the new apostle of Northumbria founded his first community; and like his great predecessor at Iona he chose for its site—for his Delos, his *Holy Isle*—an island, Lindisfarne, lying just off the coast, nearly opposite to the old Bernician capital, Bamborough.[4] (Northumbria was one kingdom under Oswald and Oswiu; but these kings belonged to the Bernician house.) Lindisfarne became in its turn the parent of all the other monasteries in Northumbria, northward as far as the Forth, southward as far as the Humber; of Melrose, of Coldingham, of Hartlepool, of Hexham, of Whitby (Streoneshealch); of those two linked monasteries of sacred memory, Monkwearmouth and Jarrow: most of these, like the Irish monasteries, standing to look out

[1] Beda, *l.c.*
[2] Ibid., iii. 3.
[3] Ibid., iii. 19.
[4] Ibid., iii. 3.

seaward, and listen to the sound of the waves; almost all, too, destined, like the Irish monasteries, to fall among the earliest victims to the coming fury of the Vikings.

Twelve English monasteries, and in Scotland thirteen, looked back to Irish monks as their founders; but in a remoter degree almost all the religious communities of England and Scotland, nay, almost all the Christianity of Heptarchic England[1] might be reckoned as the offspring of the foundation at Iona.

In return, Englishmen and Welshmen, even Gauls and Franks, flocked to the Irish schools. They learned much there; for, as has been said, much learning was cherished there which had been well-nigh lost in Central Europe. And some things they learned which could hardly be set down in the curriculum of any school, which yet constituted not the least important part of the inheritance of Mediæval Christianity from the Irish monks.

For here is a picture of one of the Irish missionaries in England, which Beda has handed down to us. It was 'when Sigebert governed the kingdom of the East Angles,' almost at the time, that is, of the fatal battle of Heathfield, 'that there came out of Ireland a holy man named Furseus, a man renowned both for his words and actions, and noted for his singular virtues; desirous for the Lord's sake to live a stranger in England.' This coming of Furseus, therefore, preceded the mission of Aidan from Iona. In these still happy East Anglian regions Fursey built for himself and his companions a monastery, pleasantly situated amid woods, and (for old associations were strong in him) 'with the sea not far off.' There, soothed by the sound of the familiar waves, it happened at one time to Fursey to have a vision. He fell into a trance, and remained rigid from cock-crow to evening, and when he awoke he gave an account of what his soul had seen while away from his body. He was carried up by angels from earth to heaven, he heard the happy choirs of the blest, heard the

[1] 'Kent alone owed its Christianity to the Roman missionaries' (Raine, Preface to *Lives of Archbishops of York* (Rolls Ser.)

praises which they sang eternally in the presence of the Lord.

Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem,
Videbitur Deus deorum in Sion,[1]

his guardian angels chanted, and the choir answered from above.

Looking down, too, over the world he saw the four fires—the fire of lying, the fire of greedy desire, the fire of discord, the fire of impiety—which burned at the four corners of the earth; which each generation fed to greater fury, until at last the four fires would unite, and the world would be consumed. Fursey had to pass through one of these fires, and by the power of his angel went unscathed; save that a devil who was tormenting those in the flame threw at him the body of a certain man whom Fursey had known in the flesh, and whose clothes he had received when he died. The angel warded him from real injury, but his earthly body ever afterwards bore upon the mouth and cheek the marks of the hurts which had been inflicted by the touch of the burning limb upon the soul of the saint.[2]

This was the first of many stories concerning another world which, during this and the succeeding centuries, came out of Ireland. There was the story of the voyage of St. Brandan to a sort of Earthly Paradise, a sort of Islands of the Blessed, in the far west. The existence of the islands of St. Brandan was firmly believed in throughout the Middle Ages.[3]

It was believed—no flattering belief—that Ireland had to itself a special opening to the under-world; and St. Bridget in a vision saw numberless souls descending by that way. Out of this belief grew the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory, which stands next to the legend of St. Brandan's voyage as one of the best known of mediæval myths; the legend told of the

[1] The Chant, so it happens, which the 'Family of Iona' sang when Columba visited Kentigern at Whithern (Candida Casa)—that oldest and most forgotten among English religious foundations.

[2] Beda, *H.E.*, iii. 19. Fursey went afterwards into France and founded a monastery at Lagny; and there he died.

[3] T. Wright, in *Percy Society Publications*, vol. xiv.

descent into purgatory, by an opening near Lough Derg, of a certain knight, Sir Owayne, and of his return.[1] All these were (save in the germ) later, mediæval legends. Up to the time of the Viking outbreak the Vision of Fursey stands almost alone as a legend which tells of the future state. Next to it, a little later, comes the 'Vision of Drihthelm,' which likewise reaches us from Ireland. It was told to Beda by one Hæmgils, a hermit, an Englishman, but residing in Ireland. Fursey's vision is, then, so far as we know, the first of an unending series which extends all through the Middle Ages, and on which, more than on any other form of intellectual food, the mind of mediæval Catholicism was nourished. It may seem to some reader a strange assertion that there ever was a time in the history of Christendom when mankind and monk-kind had not their thoughts constantly running upon Hell, and Purgatory, and Heaven. But I believe the assertion could be substantiated. The thoughts of early Christendom turned rather upon the Millenium and the Second Coming of Christ to reign *here* in power, than upon the fate of the disembodied soul, and on places of reward and punishment after death.[2] Christendom had, of course, the Vision of the Seer of Patmos. But that Apocalypse, for all its Eastern richness of apparel, will, I fancy, always seem rather confused and shapeless to Western eyes. At any rate it was only now that visions of Hell and Purgatory began to take prominence. They are among the peculiar fruits of monasticism, and (it would be fair to argue) of Irish monasticism above all other branches. The belief in the intermediate place of probation was only now, in the seventh century, beginning to be generally received.

Fursey; Drihthelm; then there is the vision of a monk of Lake Constance (another region, by the way, closely associated with the labours of the Irish missionaries) related by Walafrid Strabo; there is a French legend of the Vision of Charles the Fat (881–887), not probably of the date of Charles the Fat;

[1] T. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory.*
[2] *Cf.* Michelet, *La Sorcière* beginning.

the Vision of Tundale (another Irishman[1]); the Vision of Alberic of Monte Cassino. These two last belong to the twelfth century, when imagination was growing feverish upon the subject. At length the long series, which began in the East Anglian monastery, culminates in the awful Revelation of the Florentine. Who could more fitly strike the first note in this grand fugue than the Irish monks, who lived by the melancholy ocean, upon the borders of the world?

We have seen of the beliefs of the ancient Germans enough to know that they had their visions or their picture, shadowy enough in all details, of the home of the dead. It comes to us from Norse literature. The Northmen, too, lived hard by the borders of the earth, and were likely to concern themselves with what lay beyond it. In time, when they settled in the Western Islands, the Vikings came in contact with the Celtic monks of Ireland and Scotland; and out of this contact grew a new vision of a half-heathen hell and purgatory; a half-Christian heaven; a half-Christian legend of the destruction of the world. It is enshrined in some of the most beautiful of early Northern verse. It will be our business, should, in some future volume, the course of this history reach the proper period, to speak of this great creation—to speak of the Edda poetry and Edda mythology as a whole—the swan-song of Teutonic heathendom.

VI.

While in the manner which we have partly described the Irish Church was spreading its branches and its influence in many directions throughout the British Isles, other missionaries from the same centre made their way to Continental Europe. We go back a little in the course of time. The age of *Sturm und Drang* was not long over, but the fate of the Western Empire was sealed. So complete was the prostration of Rome that the Teutonic nations almost immediately began to turn their

[1] He is said to have been the son of a king of Cashel. Tundale is not an Irish name and must be a corruption. Elsewhere his name appears as Duggall—Dughall?

arms against one another. It was only at this stage that the differences between Christians and heathens came into relief, and that a contest of races changed gradually into a contest of creeds. By the middle of the sixth century all the intrusive barbarians, except the English, had become Christians; and the reign of heathendom on the Continent was limited to the not-Rome of ancient days, the country beyond the Rhine. The Gaulish Church claimed to have conquered its conquerors. But after the first *élan* of Catholic enthusiasm, which animated Clodowig and his immediate successors, the Frankish nation had sunk back to semi-heathenism, and the Church of Gaul into deep corruption. Columbanus came from Iona to reform the Church and the monasticism of Gaul, and to beard the fierce half-heathen princes of the Merovingian House. He is an impressive figure, fierce, intolerant, rash, indomitable.[1]

One while he passed beyond the boundaries of Christendom, and, in company with a brother missionary, the famous St. Gall, came to that very place of which Ammian has left us a little picture—Brigantia (Bregenz), surrounded by its dark and swampy ways, whither 'the Romans, with their customary good sense, have made a road.' Lake Constance, that region of mountain and lake, was for some time the scene of the labours of the two missionaries. They preached to all who would hear, and were not afraid to court hostility by felling sacred trees and groves. They supported themselves by fishing. One night as Gall was watching his nets he heard the Spirit of the Lake calling to the Spirit of the Alps to come and help him to drive away these apostles of a foreign creed. By which legend we see that whatever else these preachers left behind, they brought their fervid Irish imagination with them.

Afterwards Columban desired to pass into Italy, but Gall to continue his work among the Helvetians. The contention was so sharp between them that Columban departed, leaving his curse upon Gallen and his work—a fruitless curse, for the other remained among the hills and founded the monastery which

[1] *Vita S. Columbani Ord. S. Bened.*, ii. 27. *Cf.* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, ii. 2.

bears his name, second in importance to scarcely any religious house in the Middle Ages. Columban, as we know, went and founded Bobbio, in Lombardy: St. Gallen and Bobbio were places specially favoured in after-years by the German Carling house.

The labours of the Irish missionaries in heathen lands were directed chiefly[1] to the countries of the Upper Rhine and Upper Danube, and to Switzerland. Wherever they came they founded monasteries, which lay like Roman camps entrenched in a foreign country. In all seven monasteries in France, seventeen in Alsace and Lorraine, fifteen in Switzerland and in the parts east of the Rhine, sixteen in Bavaria, counted Irish monks as their founders.[2] And for the whole body of Celtic missionaries who worked and died in these lands who can count them? One hundred and fifty are commemorated in the dedications of Churches, or as the patrons of towns and villages—one hundred and fifty, of whom thirty-six were martyrs: though little enough is now remembered of their life and works.

Caught by the same enthusiasm, the English monks began presently to tread in the footsteps of the Irish, and to go out and preach among the heathen Germans; and as nearer allies in race and language their efforts might be expected to be crowned with even greater success. Conversions proceeded apace among the Germans of Upper Germany before the English missionary era began; so that the labours of these last lay to a great extent among the people of the Lower Rhine and beyond it, with the Frisians of the Low Countries, the Saxons between the Rhine and the Elbe. The English, though in the days of the Folk-wanderings they had not gone so far afield as some of their brother Teutons, were not less inveterate wanderers than the Scotch and Irish of this era, or than they have remained ever since. The love of pilgriming to Rome became a veritable contagion among the English princes and nobles at the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries.

[1] But far from exclusively. [2] Montalembert, *Moines d'Occident.*

It was, we have said, reckoned a happy thing for Catholicism that the conversion of the Franks and English came so late. They escaped the fatal heresy of the Arians, and they were reborn into the Christian community at a time when more order was coming into it; when monasticism from being an external, independent, almost republican influence, was being absorbed into the regular constitution of the Church; and when the central of power in the West—the See of Rome—was from day to day assuming a position more unchallenged. As the Franks made themselves the champions of the Catholic dogma in Western Europe, so were the English the champions and the exponents of a peculiar devotion to the Holy See. This was symbolized by the love of pilgriming to Rome which marked the laity;[1] and it was proclaimed in a still more emphatic and important way by some of the saints and confessors of the English Church. It produced a rift between the English and the Irish Churches, and more than anything else (before the coming of the Vikings) checked the influence of the latter on Christendom at large.

As in the days of the first barbarian invasions the heat of the Trinitarian controversy threw into the shade the history of the earliest encounters between Christianity and Heathenism, so in this age the achievements of the Irish missionaries in the region of German Germany were obscured by the dispute which arose over the validity of their mission. The dispute seems in our eyes contemptible enough. It turned on certain questions of the form of the tonsure to be used by monks, and on the proper time (in a certain eventuality) for observing Easter. In substance the dispute was really this: Pope Gregory the Great, the first tonsured Pope, had come from the monastery of Monte Cassino. He and his successors, most of whom were tonsured likewise, supported the rule of St. Benedict, as the only orthodox rule for monasticism. The 'tonsure of St. Peter,' as it was called, was the symbol of

[1] The following are the names of some Heptarchic kings who made pilgrimages to Rome:—*Wessex*—Ine and Ceadwalla; *Essex*—Offa I. and Sihtric; *Mercia*—Cœnred.

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conformity to that rule; and the Irish Church rejected rule and tonsure (for much the same reason that made the Goths reject the formula of the Council of Nice) because their monachism had an earlier pedigree, and traced its descent directly from the monachism of Africa. In England the two streams met—Augustine and Paulinus had journeyed from the South, despatched by that very Gregory who was the originator of all this controversy; Aidan and his disciples drew their inspiration from Iona. We may guess that the English were not loath to proclaim their independence of their Celtic godfathers; their devotion to the popes may have been stimulated by their pride of race. The question was decided for Northumbria at the famous synod of Whitby (Streoneshealch), when the use of Iona was formally repudiated by the English ecclesiastics.

A.D. 664.

The chief figure in this revolution—for it may be called a revolution—is that of St. Wilfred (Wilfrið), the Archbishop of York, a man, as appears, of proud and passionate character,[1] but of eminent and commanding virtues, influenced, too, by a special devotion to the Holy See.[2] He carried this prepossession to the extent of embroiling himself not only with the Scottish ecclesiastics in Northumbria, not only with his own princes, but with the great Theodore, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Of these disputes, of Wilfred's frequent appeals to the Pope and his councils, even of the efforts which he made to destroy the Scottish Church in Northumbria, we have not to speak in detail. But it concerns us to step aside for a moment to watch his mission into Sussex, that is to say into the last considerable stronghold of heathenism in England.[3] The story which Beda[4] tells us of the great famine which raged among the South Saxons at the time when Wilfred began his mission, the tragic picture which he draws of whole companies of men and women impelled by the misery of

[1] *Cf.* Eddius, *Vita Wilfrithi ep.* in Raine, *Hist. of Arbps. of York*, i. 1–103 (Rolls Ser.), c. 14, 16. Wilfred was the greatest name upon the Roman side at the synod, Colman and Hilda on the Scottish.

[2] Eddius, *l. c.*

[3] The Isle of Wight alone was converted later.

[4] *Hist. Ec.*, iv. 13.

hunger and going *hand in hand* to some cliff's edge and casting themselves thence into the sea, of Wilfred teaching the people how to catch fish by nets and so relieve their distress, secures that the history of this mission of St. Wilfred shall remain fixed in our memory.[1]

The Christianization of Sussex and of the Isle of Wight which marks the closing years of the seventh century, completes the history of the conversion of the intrusive heathens, those who had occupied lands which were once part of the Roman Empire and part of ancient Christendom. The conversion of heathen *Germany*—or German Germany we have called it—had, we know, begun long before this date. But to what extent it had proceeded is obscure to us. Could we even know exactly how far the power of the Franks spread east of the Rhine it would be something. The first victory of the Franks over the Alamanni (Zülpich, 496) led, as we saw, to that event of world-wide import, the conversion of Chlodowig. The later victories of the Franks over the Thüringians, Frisians, Bavarians must, by another process, have in themselves led to the partial conversion of these people.[2] But even these conquests we cannot accurately date. When the Bavarians first appear before us by name, they appear as already to some extent the subjects of the Franks. Still, the Irish missionaries found much to do among them. With the northern German races beyond the Rhine it was probably the same. Both Frisians and Thüringians were already partly converted. But heathenism was still strong among them. It was (we have said) to these northern Germans that the English missionaries chiefly turned.

VII.

Wilfred himself began the work. The origin of these his labours recalls the history of Columba; he was driven from

[1] The story must be more or less apocryphal. It is not possible that people so far advanced in civilization should be ignorant of the prehistoric art of making nets.

[2] That it was only partial we know well enough from the history of Boniface's mission, *Vita* (Pertz, ii. 346). *Cf.* Jaffé, *Mon. Moguntina*.

his chosen scene of work, or left it self-exiled, and found for a time a new field among the heathens of Frisia. It was in A.D. 678 that he first landed in these regions. He found a king of Frisia, Andgisl, not unfriendly, and during the short period of his mission he converted and baptized, his biographer tells us, many thousands. Wilfred can hardly be numbered among the great English missionaries in heathen Germany; not at least for what he himself accomplished; but he initiated much. For a pupil of his at Ripon 'was the famous Willibrord'[1] who spent more than an average lifetime among the Frisians; he went to them first in A.D. 692, and died among them at a great age as the first bishop of Utrecht in A.D. 739. During the years of his mission he once overstepped the border and preached in Denmark.[2]

A.D. 678.

A.D. 692.

The next in succession is a still more celebrated name. Winfred,[3] or, as he was afterwards called, Boniface, was born in a region remote from the sphere of the Northumbrian Scottish Church, in the half-Welsh Devonshire, and under the rule of the West Saxon kings. Wessex, of course, like all the rest of the Heptarchic kingdoms, save Kent, owed its Christianity to Northumbria, and therefore in the second degree to Iona. It had not been Christian half a century when Boniface was born. But it made up in zeal for the lateness of its conversion; that is if we may take as a sign of zeal the eagerness of its kings to make pilgrimages to Rome. The two kings under whom Boniface lived his adult years in England, Ceadwalla and Ine, both died in Rome. Boniface may have been prepared by the popular feeling in Wessex for the special devotion to the Papal See which marked all his missionary work abroad, and which was as important an element in it, almost, as his success in the conversion of the heathen.

He, like his two predecessors above spoken of, turned his

[1] Eddius, c. 26. [2] Alcuini, *Vita S. Willib.* in Migne, t. 101.

[3] *Vita S. Bonifacii* (Wilibald Acta SS. June 5 Benedict. Sæc. viii.; Pertz, vol. ii.). There is an excellent sketch of the life of Boniface by Mr. E. Maunde Thompson in the *Dic. Nat. Biog.*

first steps to Frisia. But he found that country in the throes of a counter-revolution. The Andgisl of Wilfred's time had been succeeded by Radbod, one of those rare champions of heathendom whom we encounter in the course of this history, who had the courage of his belief in the creed of his forefathers. Athanaric, the Goth, is one such; the fierce Penda is another. Radbod came, indeed, near to accepting baptism: but he bethought himself of asking, if it were true what the priests said that by baptism alone could men hope for salvation, where, in that case, were his unbaptized forefathers; and his instructor had the honesty to confess that, according to his creed, they must be burning in hell. 'Then,' said the Frisian prince, 'I will rather live there with my ancestors than go to heaven with a parcel of beggars.' All the old Teuton pride of race spoke in that answer. And now Radbod had turned violently against the Christians, driven them forth, burnt their churches, and rebuilt the heathen temples. He was at war, too, with Pippin and the Franks.[1]

In Hesse and Thüringia, whither Boniface next turned, his labours lay partly in converting the heathen Germans, partly in combating the work of earlier 'schismatic' preachers in these lands; by which phrase we are to understand the Irish missionaries who had preceded him. Thus the stream of English proselytism finally left the old channel, and for the rest of Boniface's life one-half of his activity was employed in reforming the semi-Christian communities (so he considered them) which he found in Germany, and in bringing them into obedience to the Holy See.[2] It was all in keeping with this principle that, when in A.D. 722 (he was back again in Frisia at this time), Willibrord would have consecrated him bishop and named him as his successor at Utrecht, he refused, on the ground that he could not receive consecration without the sanction of the Pope. He then went to Rome, summoned

A.D. 719–723.

[1] Radbod died A.D. 719.

[2] *Cf.* Jaffé, *Mon Mogunt.* passim, especially Nos. 49–52, and *Vita Bonif.* 29, &c. (Pertz, ii. 3, 4, 6.)

thither by Pope Gregory II. After he had remained in Rome a year, and had satisfied the Pope of his orthodoxy, he was made a bishop; he on his side pledging himself in writing to do nothing in disobedience to the Holy Father. Such a consecration on such terms was a novelty, and it forms an epoch in the history of the Christian Church north of the Alps. In A.D. 732, after a second residence in Rome, Boniface was made an archbishop by Gregory III., and endowed with the primacy of Germany.

Winfred travelled back through Bavaria, one of the chief scenes of labour for his Irish predecessors, and occupied himself in reforming the Bavarian Church in the sense that I have indicated.[1] In Hesse he found much pure heathenism, and there he did what Columban and Gall had nearly called down popular vengeance by doing, set himself to destroy the shrines of the ancient faith. History records a scene in
Bet. A.D. 725 and A.D. 731. which the saint took axe in hand to fell a certain sacred oak at Geissmar, near Frizlar.[2] At the first few strokes of the axe, says the legend, the tree fell and broke into four pieces.[3] The heathens were overawed by the miracle, and the Christians assisted the apostle to build a church to St. Peter upon the site—a single picture which our memory can retain out of Boniface's incessant labours.

A.D. 744. A little further north Boniface founded Fulda monastery, in A.D. 744. In the deep forest shades (the Bucinian forest) the monks' chapel bell might be heard calling morning, noon, and evening, to prayers, where late, maybe, the cries of human victims had startled the echoes. Here Boniface's bones were afterwards laid, and here they worked miracles. Greater were the miracles he worked while living. The results of his labours are immeasureable.

Boniface found in Germany a Christianity of a sort; a nebulous *influence* of the spiritual Irish kind; he left a Church

[1] He was again engaged in the same work in A.D. 739.

[2] A place (if we may judge by the name) sacred for a miraculous fount as well as for a holy tree. *Cf.* Förstemann, *s. v.* Geissmar.

[3] *Vita Bonif.* (Wilibald), vi. 22.

in Germany, ordered, orthodox, devoted to the Holy See. We have not to discuss which kind of conversion might have eventually proved the most wholesome. For to discuss any other than the actual event, we should have to imagine mediæval Catholicism unformed—and that would be to suppose the great era of mediæval history a blank page on which we might write an imaginary history to suit our pleasure. It may be questioned whether any one person contributed so much to the creation of mediæval Catholicism as did this wonderful man.

In the three great personalities, Wilfred, Willibrord, and Winfred or Boniface, we may watch how the English Church parts company with the Irish, and continues henceforward to trace out a new channel for itself. In A.D. 567 began, as we saw, the eastward flow of the wave of missionary labour. At the synod of Whitby (A.D. 664) occurred the first marked division between the Churches, whereby the Irish stream of influence was, so to say, dammed up on the English side, and a new reservoir was formed. Wilfred, consistently enough, refused to receive consecration at the hands of the Northumbrian bishops, and obtained it from the Bishop of Lyons. He inaugurated the English missionary work by his own labours in A.D. 678, and still more by training up Willibrord for his great work in Frisia—Willibrord who, it is well for us to remember, once passed the Frisian border and preached in Denmark, the first missionary in any Scandinavian land. Last came Boniface, A.D. 716, whose *nolo episcopari* at the hands of Willibrord, only emphazised the lesson which Wilfred sought to teach by refusing Scottish consecration: such great work as he was engaged upon must not alone be free from the taint of schism, it must receive its inspiration direct from the Holy See.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST CONTESTS.

I.

Of those two Christian forces with which we have just been concerned, the Irish missionaries and the English missionaries in Europe, the former seems especially associated with the first Frankish dynasty, the Merovings, the latter with the second, the house of Heristal. Columba's mission belongs to the days of Fredegond and Brunehild, the darkest period of the Meroving annals. Boniface could never have achieved what he did without the assistance of Charles the Hammer. He came to the Frank mayor specially recommended by Pope Gregory. He is *said* to have crowned Pippin the Short, at Soissons, in 751,[1] as the representative of Pope Zachary, four years before Boniface's own death.

The difference between the relationships of the Irish missionaries and the English to the two Frankish houses is, however, marked enough. Columba arraigned the dissolute Merovingian kings more fiercely than he braved the heathen Germans on Lake Constance: Boniface, in his great work of establishing not Christianity only but an ordered Church, leaned constantly upon the support of the secular arm; the close alliance of Church and State was inaugurated by him.[2]

[1] See Sickel, *Forsch. z. deut. G.*, iv. 445, for this date.
[2] *Cf.* Jaffé, *Mon. Mogunt*, 52.

Meantime the State had its own era of contests with heathendom. From the very beginning we see the arms of the Franks turned against their brother Germans—against Germans (Christians) upon this side of the Rhine, Burgundians and Visigoths; against Germans (heathens or half-heathens) upon the farther side of the river, Bavarians, Alamannians, Thüringians, Frisians: only, as we have said before, the details of the latter series of contests are mostly lost to us. We cannot quite tell how far they are to be looked upon as contests between heathendom and Christendom. We may be sure that the main object of them was not the spread of Christianity, but the expansion of the Frankish empire. Ere we come to a war, undertaken with the distinct object of extending the realm of Christ—a war which we may really designate the first *Crusade* the world ever knew—we must wait till we come to the Saxon War of Charlemagne.

But before we do this we may pause a moment and listen to the first faint note of another, a very different martial air, which comes wafted to us down the stream of time—that air which, in the great orchestra of history, will for some time rise continually higher and higher, will mingle with and, for a little while, overpower whatever music comes from either Christian Church or Christian State.

Far back in the Meroving era, in the reign of Theodoric, the son of Clovis, who reigned in Austrasia, and held the country of the Rhine mouth as far as to the Meuse, there came up the last-named river a Scandinavian pirate fleet, the forerunner of all the later Viking fleets. The commander of it was Hugleik (Chochilaicus, Gregory of Tours calls him [1]). Theodoric commanded his son, Theodebert, to march up and intercept the pirates. Hugleik had just finished his attack, and was superintending the re-embarkation of his men, when the Frank army

A.D. circ. 515.

[1] Greg. Tur., *Hist. Fr.*, iii. 3 (Bouquet ii. 187). Chlochilaic for Hugleik, Anglicised into Hygelác, see *Munch Norske Folks Historie*, I. i. 52 (Ed. 1852), and Saxo Gram. *Hist. Dan.*

fell upon him, and in the hand-moot which ensued Hugleik fell—handgemót þær mon Hygelác slóh, as our English poem, *Beowulf*, has it—

> Nor was that the least
> Of hand-to-hand fights where they Hygelác slew;
> When the Geat King in war-wagers
> The folk's good lord on the Frisian strand,[1]
> Hréthels descendant, with blood drunken died.[2]

It was a spasmodic effort, a remote forewarning of future events, without immediate result of any kind; unless we count as result this echo in verse sounding from the distant past as over a wide water.

Hugleik becomes in the English poem Hygelác. His interest for us lies in the slight picture of him drawn in *Beowulf*. He was the elder brother of the hero of the poem; and one picture which we get in it is of Hygelác sitting in his palace close by the sea-wall—in South Sweden was it, or in Zealand?[3]—and listening to Beowulf's history of his deeds among the 'Ring Danes.' Perhaps that story fired him to try his own fortunes even farther afield.

Such an awakening of the Viking spirit was like the fabulous awakening of Barbarossa, while he slept under the palace at Kaiserslautern. 'Do the ravens still fly round the hill? . . . Then must I sleep another hundred years.' For almost three centuries more the curtain descends upon the Baltic nations. They did, it may be, valiant deeds, and developed a race of heroes. They went down to Orcus, and long night oppressed them. They went not, indeed, unsung; but the ballads which

[1] Lit. 'lands.'

[2] Nó þæt læsest wæs
Handgemóta, þær mon Hygelác slóh,
Syððan Geata cyning gúðe-ræsum,
Freawine folces Freslondum on,
Hréðels eafora hioro-dryncum swealt.
Beowulf, l. 2354–8 (Grein).

[3] For the question is disputed.

told their history have not survived to our day, save in the case of the few heroes of the poem *Beowulf*.

The travelling of this poem, or the germ of it, across the North Sea, not later probably than the year A.D. 700, must be taken to argue some intercourse between the opposite shores of the German Ocean. Englishmen had already heard of the Danes; for once the voice of Willibrord had broken the silence of the Danish forests. We see from the poem that they had heard, too, of a farther land than Jutland, the land of the Geatas or Goths, from which one must pass over the swan road (the sea) to reach Denmark. This may have been Zealand. It may have been Gauthiod, Gothland, in the southern elbow of Scandinavia.

Save for this the Baltic had sunk out of sight of the historic world much as Britain had done in the days of Procopius. Charles the Great, in the course of his Saxon wars, had the merit of rediscovering that sea—for good or evil.

It is in the Saxon wars of Charlemagne that begins a new era in the relationships of Christendom and Heathendom. Up till now the efforts of Christianity among the outer heathens had been, chiefly at any rate, of a missionary kind, by persuasion not by force. Pippin the Short had used something more than persuasion in the case of the Frisian king, Radbod.

Missionaries had gone to the Saxons, and they had been allowed to kill and torture them; albeit the Saxons had become, in name at least, the tributaries of the Franks. We see two instances in the case of the two Hewalds.[1] Other martyrdoms followed. Public opinion as well as his private ambition called on Charles to stretch out his arm and teach these turbulent neighbours the might of the new empire which had grown up by their side.[2]

But let it not be thought that in its contest with heathendom —which is, in a sense, the renewal of the contest between Rome and not-Rome—the Empire of the Franks is the heir

[1] Beda, *H. E.*, v. 10.

[2] *Cf.* Einhard, *Vita Caroli Imp.*, c. 7 (Pertz, ii. 446).

of the Empire of the Roman Cæsars. That heir was the whole of western Christendom, neither more nor less. We cannot for those days reckon by political divisions, nor consider the State as a thing separate from the Church. Even in ancient Rome the two were not divided. The Emperors had in their best days wielded more than a physical power. They were *Popes*[1] as well as Emperors. Their rule was binding upon the wills and consciences of men; even in their lifetime they were half-divine. Consider the significance of the altar which Tiberius set up *Divo Augusto* at Lyons. Round that altar was concentrated the nationality of Gaul; and in virtue of it the country grew into a political unity such as it had never constituted before. Before that altar the Roman of the 'Province,' and the native of northern Gaul, could unite in a common faith. The latter did not abandon his adoration of streams, or oaks, or of Bormo or Grannus; his ancestral belief was no obstacle to his offering sacrifice, or paying sincere vows to the spirit of the Divine Augustus.

But in Christendom, which was before all else a theocracy, the temporal ruler claimed no worship, only such honour as belonged to one appointed by Heaven. Christ was now the *βασιλεὺς βασιλέων*, the setter-up and puller-down of kings. All parts of Western Christendom acknowledged one creed, one moral law, independent of the caprice of monarchs; and by this unity of worship and belief all Christian Europe was indissolubly bound together. This moral and religious union was supplemented too by an intellectual one; for almost all the literature of those days was theological, and all the natives of Western Christendom had the same literature in this kind. They had finally a common literary language—Latin. It was the language, not of priests and monks alone, but of almost all public documents and public transactions. The compilers of our chronicle (following Beda) set out by enumerating the various languages which had their home in the island of

[1] *Pontifices Maximi.* This title had by the time of Charlemagne been appropriated by the Popes; it was, in fact, the only *official* title which distinguished them from other bishops.

Britain in the days of which they write. These languages are the English, the British, the Scottish, the Pictish, and the 'Book-Latin.'[1] And this 'Book-Latin' would have its place in a summary of the different languages in use in any state of Western Europe during these days. It was now, in the eighth century, beginning to be sharply distinguished from the colloquial Latin—the *lingua rustica* of the so-called Latin races.

No longer, then, materially, by means of a single political system, nor by visible armies tramping, and messengers speeding, along the Roman roads, but, in a manner, spiritually and through the air, the old unity of the Empire was maintained. The language of men's deepest thoughts was the language of Cicero and Pliny, only modified by the flight of time; the art of writing, by which *they* recorded their thoughts, had travelled from Rome and Milan all across the Western Empire, and was at this moment being practised in its full perfection on the remotest known island of Europe. The same absorbtion in the study of theology, the same hopes and fears about the future life, were common to all Christian Europe, at any rate to all Western Christendom.

As for the physical conformation of Western Christendom, that too was changed somewhat from what it had been in the days of the Roman Empire.

It had lost almost the whole of Spain—a huge cantle—since the great three-days' battle by the banks of the Guadalete, when Roderic and the flower of the Goths went down before the swords of the Arabs; and now nearly all that land was ruled by the powerful khalifs of Cordova. A little strip in the north was still reserved to Christendom. On the eastern side the Spanish March, which belonged to the Franks; its boundary extended sometimes as far as the Ebro, and included the territory of the Vascones (Navarre), A.D. 711.

[1] 'Boclæden.' *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, beg. This passage only occurs in MSS. D–F. D has five languages, thus: English, Britwelsh (*i.e.*, British), Scotch, Pictish, and Boclæden. E and F have six: English, British (Britisc), Welsh, &c.

near the western edge of the Pyrenees, but generally it had a smaller compass; it was a triangle, whose apex lay half-way along the line of the Pyrenees, whose base was the coast line from the Spanish frontier to Barcelona. On the western side was the remains of the Gothic power, the little kingdom of Asturias, hidden away among its mountains, soon to expand into the better-known kingdom of Leon.

In return for what it had lost in the West, in the East the limits of Christendom extended far beyond the ancient limits of the Roman Empire. So far the missionaries, Irish and English, and the power of the Frankish State had done their work. Bavaria (Bajuvaria) Alamannia, a part of Burgundy, represented, in a certain sense, the Roman provinces Vindelicia, Rhætia, Noricum; but Bavaria extended beyond the limit of these provinces. It stretched from the Alps to the Danube, and in some places a little to the further side of it, and from the Lech to the Enns. Beyond Bavaria eastward were further acquisitions recently won—the Ostmark, which separated Christendom from the heathen Slavs and barbarous Avars; south of it lay the province of Carinthia (Pannonia), which was at this time a portion of the kingdom of Italy. North of Alamannia you came to East Frankland (Franconia), which stretched on both sides of the Rhine from the Maas almost to the source of the Main; and east of East Frankland lay Thüringia, big with the future history of Germany.

But as you travelled still further north, the limit of the empire began to contract again, and the Rhine more nearly became, as of old, the boundary between Rome and not-Rome, for beyond it, hidden in its dense forests, lay the fierce, unconverted nation of the Saxons. One might liken Western Christendom at the time of the outbreak of the Saxon war to a huge ellipse, stretching north-west and south-east, from the foot of Italy to the north of Scotland; its shorter axis touching those two nearest foes of the faith—the Saxons in the north, and the Saracens in the south. Then the two foci of this ellipse (a little misplaced, it is true) would be the

two capitals of the West, the capitals of the Church and of the State—Rome and Aix-la-Chapelle.[1]

II.

The land of the Saxons extended from very near the Rhine at one part (where the Lippe flows into the greater river) as far as the mythic Eyder,[2] at the foot of the Cimbric Chersonese. Through it flowed the wizard stream of the Elbe, and emptied itself into the German Ocean. The great mass of the Saxon people lay upon this side of the Elbe, and were known (to the chroniclers) as the Cis-Albiani or Hither Saxons; in a little corner of land between the Elbe and the Eyder and the Baltic lay the Trans-Albiani or Farther Saxons. The Hither Saxons were in their turn divided into three separate tribes or nations—the Eastphalians, the Angrarii or Engern, and the Westphalians.

But of all those confederated German tribes which had once stretched along the southern shore of the Baltic, among whom Nerthus had journeyed in her shrouded car, none now remained. The Saxons had no neighbours of their own creed and kin save the Danes of Jutland. These were their only allies, and the natural enemies of the crusading Franks. To the east of the Further Saxons, on the southern Baltic coast, lay none but Slavs, their natural enemies. With the nearest of these, the Abodriti (Obotriti), Charlemagne entered into an alliance.

It was in A.D. 772 that the Frankish troops first crossed the borders and appeared among the wood-land villages and sacred groves of the heathen. **A.D. 772.**

They were trespassing into that very region from which Drusus had turned back in awe, and where even the Roman eagles had gone down. The same forests and the same marshes that had entrapped Varus lay in wait for them; the

[1] Aix-la-Chapelle was in no special sense the capital of the Frankish Empire before A.D. 795.

[2] Ægisdyr, the door of Ægir, the northern sea-god.

same *brotis*, no doubt, were raised to impede their advance. But perhaps the Franks, though converted, were more proof against the incantations of wise women, and less strange to the *genius loci* than the Romans had been.[1] For, in fact, they met with but slight resistance to their first expedition; and Christendom heard with delight that they had taken one of the Saxon strongholds, Eresburg, had penetrated into a very sacred grove in the Lippe-Detmold country, and had there cut down a holy tree or pillar called Irminsul.[2]

We know what these sacred groves were. The mention of one in this place is a link which unites the far-off past of Tacitus's day with the still longer-lived heathenism of the north, represented in the sacred grove of Upsala. It was near eight hundred years since Augustus had ordered his camps to be broken up and his posts to fall back from all the once-conquered country between Paderborn[3] and the Rhine, and so given back the country to barbarism. Since then till now we may believe that the ancient life of the Teutons and their ancient creed had undergone little change.

The Saxons were, maybe, this first time taken by surprise. The fierceness with which they resisted other attacks and revenged their disasters was worthy of the ground on which they fought, and would have been worthy of Arminius and his Chatti. Two years after there opened out to them the prospect of revenge. For Charles was called away that year into Italy, where Desiderius, the Lombard king, was deep in those quarrels with the Pope, out of which the Franks reaped so many benefits. Pope Adrian I. had definitely gone over to the side of the Franks; and it was his declared partizanship for Charles which set Desiderius's army in motion towards Rome. An appeal from Adrian brought Charles over the Alps to depose the Lombard king. Thereupon the Saxons

[1] 'Tremit Saxonia inaccessa paludibus' (Widukind).

[2] Einhard, *Annales*, *s. a.* 772. As most of the incidents of the Saxon war are taken from the *Annales* of Einhard, it is unnecessary to repeat the references thereto, which are sufficiently given by the dates alone.

[3] Aliso, the Roman station, lay near the modern Paderborn. The Romans in Aliso had made a brave stand after the defeat of Varus.

made a counter-raid into the territory of the Franks, burning and slaughtering all they could. They streamed into Hesse. There they found the Church which Boniface had built out of the wood of Thor's oak at Geismar, and this they burnt; a due set-off against the destruction of their own holy Irminsul.

Two Saxon 'nations' took part in these attacks. **A.D. 774.** The Engern, who had possessed the Irminsul, made the raid into Hesse. The Westphalians turned north, and burnt in like fashion the churches east of the Rhine as far as Deventer in Frisia. They were but few against an empire. If heathendom had banded together all its forces the contest would have been more equal. Who can tell what the results might then have been? But, again, we reflect that such great combinations are impossible among half-savage people such as these.

In 775 Charlemagne determined to conduct **A.D. 775.** the war upon a larger scale and in a more thoroughgoing manner than heretofore. It had, in fact, been solemly decreed in council that Saxony was to be conquered and forcibly converted to Christianity. Charles marched beyond the Weser into the very heart of the Saxon territory, and harried it on every side. He manned two forts, Eresburg and Sigesburg, hard by the Weser and the Lippe, to hold the Saxons in check.

Next year the king was again called away **A.D. 776.** into Italy, and the Saxons rose again in all the conquered land, and the forts were retaken. But when they tried to cross the Rhine they were repulsed, and once more the iron forest of the Frankish spears appeared in their leafy retreats. We may surmise of what nature was this guerilla warfare of the heathen Teutons. The warriors of the mark made their forays and escaped behind the Danish frontier; the more peaceable villagers, unless they could escape in time, were left to pay the penalty. They might promise submission and give hostages; but they could not control the action of the warriors. Charles interpreted each fresh outbreak of hostilities as treachery, which

might be justly avenged by a slaughter of prisoners; and hate begot hate.

There had been local tribal wars, no doubt, without number, but nothing since the days of Varus to daunt the woods in the shape of a great foreign invasion until the crusade of Charlemagne. Charles now claimed to hold the country as conquered territory, as part of his empire. He summoned a 'placitum' (general council) for the year at Paderborn, close by the site of the old Roman camp, Aliso.

A.D. 777. It is at this time that we once again catch sight (in the pages of history) of a Scandinavian people and hear the names of two of their kings.[1] They were two kings of South Denmark, Siegfred and Godfred by name. Such protection as he could safely give, Siegfred gave to the Saxons. Widukind, the great Saxon leader, who now appears upon the scene, many times took refuge at his court, and is *said* to have married his sister.[2] But as Siegfred likewise sent an embassy to Charles, and never in his own person took arms to assist his neighbours, we must perhaps look upon him as a sort of Maroboduus (the Markman), a temporizer between heathendom and its enemies, as Marobod was in the days of Arminius.

In the same year Widukind himself first appears to view. Widukind (Child of the Forest[3]) was a prince in Westphalia. Beaten this time, and obliged to fly, he took refuge with Siegfred in Sleswick. But anon the hopes of the Saxons rose once more, for a cloud had gathered upon the opposite side of the kingdom, and the Franks were about to suffer the most famous reverse which they ever experienced in the long reign of Charles the Great.

[1] I have no space here to discuss Munch's attempted reconstruction of Scandinavian history before the opening of the Viking Age, *Det Norske Folks Historie*, i. 195–355. But I think it must be conceded that the conclusions arrived at are for the most part too hypothetical to be used as history.

[2] Botho, *Chron. Pict.* in *Scrip. rer. Brunsv.*, iii. 292, not a reliable authority (Kruse, i. 5).

[3] Another etymology given not long after his day was 'white child,' from his baptismal garment, a bitter nickname (Kruse, p. 5). He had apparently possessed another name, Withmund (Kruse p. 25).

Not many years previously Charlemagne had added the Basque province to the Empire of the Franks. **A.D. 778.** Its inhabitants were wild mountaineers of primitive race, whose descendants to this day speak a language not of the Indo-European family. This year (778) the king led a great expedition against the Saracens of Spain, advancing through the narrow passes of the Pyrenees to the Ebro, and beyond the Ebro to Saragossa. The enemy retreated before him fighting. Learning, it may be, that their great foe was so far withdrawn, the Saxons made ready for another raid in Frankland, and news was brought to Charles afar off that their ravages had begun. With the vanguard of his troops he hurried homeward, leaving the rearguard to follow under the command of Roland, Count—or shall we say Marquis—of the Breton marches.[1]

But as the Franks struggled through the pass—the western pass from Pampeluna to Dax—the wild Basques, who had so lately and perforce been incorporated into the Frankish kingdom, took the occasion to revolt and to fall upon this rearguard and cut it to pieces.[2] Charles heard of the disaster after he had reached France, and turned upon his steps to revenge the defeat.[3] This is that battle of Roncesvalles so abundantly celebrated in the traditions of a later age. It greatly saddened the heart of Charles. And though the Saxons far away probably knew little of all this,[4] it at least improved their opportunity, and they made a fiercer attack than ever upon the Franks. 'They had not come for booty,

[1] Einhard, *Vita*, c. 9.

[2] They were no doubt supported by the Goths. Charles had taken by force of arms the Gothic city of Pampeluna, and on his retreat he destroyed it.

[3] 'But,' says Einhard, 'found no means of coming to close quarters with the offenders.'

[4] Probably, but not certainly. The news of the great defeat may have reached as far as the earthquake which, we are told, accompanied it, namely, 'from Michel du Peril to the Saints' [from Mont St. Michel to the Three Kings of Cologne] (*Chanson de Roland*). Whether the Saxon attack preceded or followed the Roncesvalles defeat is not absolutely certain. Compare the accounts in Einhard and the monk of St. Gall.

but for vengeance,' says Einhard. They threatened the bones of Boniface at Fulda, where, after his life-labours, they reposed. They swept away the Frankish garrisons between them and the Rhine, which they reached at Deutz. That was an old Roman camp. The Saxons could not contrive to take it, nor to cross the river, but they spread all along the right bank of the stream as far as Ehrenbreitstein, opposite the Moselle.

The iron king of the Franks was not one to bend from his design before these passing misadventures. He only took up the task of conquering Saxony with more determined purpose. He divided the subdued territory into ecclesiastical districts. Missionaries, the pupils of Boniface, were placed over them: they were to complete the rough work of conversion by preaching, under the shadow of the Frankish arms, the Gospel of Peace. Charles and his Franks and his ecclesiastics now stood within but a little distance of the Danish frontier; only the Farther Saxons—the North Albiani—between them and it. And it was now that Charlemagne entered into alliance with the Slavonic Abodriti against both Saxons and Danes. It cannot be said, therefore, that on this side the Baltic nations sought a quarrel with Christendom. Unwillingly they entered in, but being in so bore it that their opposers would learn soon enough to beware of them.

A.D. 781. In 781 Charles was in Rome; his children, Pippin and Lewis, were brought to Pope Adrian to be anointed; the alliance between the king and the pope was strengthened, and the ground was prepared for that *annus mirabilis* nineteen years later, when the diadem of the Cæsars was placed on the brow of Charles. This year Saxon affairs were neglected.

A.D. 782. But in 782 Charles was again by the Lippe. He had made himself winter quarters in Saxony, called them Heristallum, a sort of pun, which one might interpret 'Army Place,' or Heristal, the ancestral home of his race, showing how much he felt himself at home in these new conquests. While here he received embassies from people

far separated from each other and little known to Christian Europe; from the king of the Avars in the south, the second race of Hunnish or Turkic invaders of Europe; from the north from Siegfred, King of the Danes. Probably Siegfred sent to excuse himself for receiving Widukind after his last flight. Widukind was with him at that moment, and was only waiting his opportunity.

His opportunity was the tyrrany of Charles's rule. It was about this time that were compiled A.D. 783–4. those capitularies for the enforcement of Christianity upon the Saxons, laws which a Philip of Spain or a Torquemada might have envied; for they imposed a death penalty upon anything which might seem to savour of recalcitrancy in accepting the new creed.[1] Yet Charles felt so sure of his ground that he had begun drafting Saxon soldiers into his army. Presently, when the Frank king's back was turned, Widukind returned to Saxony, new-furnished, we may believe, with help from the *Normanni*.

He first swept across the Danish frontier into Frisia, and burnt some of the new-built churches in that land.[2] Then he came again into Saxony, raised there an army from the ranks themselves of Charles's conscripts, caught a Frankish force commanded by one of Charles's lieutenants, and defeated it at Sündal. Thereupon Charles exacted a fearful penalty for this treason by beheading four thousand five hundred Saxon prisoners by the banks of the Alar; and he made preparations for a campaign greater than any which had gone before. The self-confidence of his opponents gave him the rare and much coveted opportunity of fighting two pitched battles with them, one on Mount Osning, in Detmold, one by the banks of the Hase, the boundary of the Westphalian kingdom. The first was doubtful; the second a decisive victory for the Franks. From this date the great stress of the Saxon war was over, though fresh revolts were continually breaking out, and much

[1] Pertz, *Leges*, i. 48–50, *Capitulare Paderbrunnense*. A.D. 785, is the date assigned to them in Pertz; Dahn gives A.D. 782, *Deut. Gesch.*, ii. 304.

[2] *Vita Leodegar.* (Kruse, 19).

harrying of the land was needful, and severe enough coercion of many kinds, before the two great Saxon leaders, Widukind and Abbio,[1] would consent to come in and be baptized. They did this in 785, and were baptized at Attigny.

A.D. 785.

What meaning they attached to the ceremony one would be curious to know. That it was a token of submission would be enough to make it hateful in their eyes. They may have heard from their forefathers how, in the days of the great Roman power, the subjects of Rome had been made to worship the ashes of the emperor. Now they heard from the Christians of a new King of all the world, called Christ; He was apparently the head, or had been the head, of the Christian empire; images of him, it appeared, were now set up for worship.[2] That I opine was about what baptism implied to these Saxons. Afterwards they took to the idea more kindly, and treated it as a good-natured joke to oblige the Christians and get, at the same time, the present of a fair linen garment. So much is implied by a story told by the monk of St. Gallen, which, if it is not true, might very well be so.[3]

A century later, when Saxonia had become not only Christian, but rather notable for its piety, a gentle monkish bard, the Cædmon of old Saxony, turned into verse the history of the Gospel. In his mouth the Heliand (Heiland) becomes a Saxon prince.

The heathens may have redoubled baptism, too, as a sort of Christian incantation, just as in after-years men, who were scarcely Christians in any other respect, looked upon it as a kind of magic passport past the terrors of the under-world.

III.

Einhard counts the Saxon war to have lasted from A.D. 772

[1] Or Albio = Alboin (Paul. Diac) = Ælfwine?

[2] Set-bergs kveða sitja sunnr at Uðrar brunni;
Svá hefir ramr gramr remdan *Róms banda sik löndom.*
(An Old Norse fragment on Christ.)

[3] See ch. VII.

to A.D. 804—thirty-three years in all,[1] the lifetime of a generation—truly, then, we may call it a life's work for Charlemagne. But the backbone of it was now broken; and we may turn from its consideration to other phases of the opening war between Heathendom and Christendom, and for a moment leave Continental Europe and revisit these lands.

When we were last concerned with this country the northern Heptarchic kingdom was at the height of its glory, although it had even then entered on its long rivalry with Mercia. It succumbed to Penda; but it rose again after the battle of Winwædfeld, 655. From that time forward for one century it remained the most brilliant state in Christendom. It had succeeded to the mantle of the Irish Church. The illuminated MSS. of Northumbria imitated but rivalled those of Ireland. In sanctity it boasted the names of Aidan and Cuthbert and Hilda, of Wilfred, of John of Beverley, and many more. Its poet was Cædmon, and its historian—the greatest that many centuries produced—was Bede. Its school at York, and its library, founded and enriched by Ecgberht and Æthelberht, were famous throughout Europe. From this school had come the greatest scholar of the day—Alcuin. A.D. 655.

But though intellectually Northumbria still kept the lead, she was no longer politically the first kingdom in the Heptarchy. A long succession of able rulers had raised Mercia to this height, and Mercia's rival was now not Northumbria but Wessex. In fact the northern kingdom had entered upon a period of turbulence which was to end in something like anarchy. It had begun 'murdering its lords,' as Charlemagne said; this anarchy would only continue and increase till the country lay an easy prey to the arms of the Vikings.

Wessex, on the contrary, the future hope of England, was rising. She had almost succeeded in gaining the upper hand of Mercia in the previous generation, when the King of Mercia, Ethelbald the Proud, was twice defeated by Cuðred of Wessex,

[1] *Vita C. Imp.* c. 7.

A.D. 752, 755. at Burford and again at Seckington, and on the latter field, 'disdaining to flee,' was slain. But

A.D. 757–796. the middle kingdom rose to power again under Offa, the greatest English king since Eadwine, a kind of lesser or mimic Charlemagne in the British island. All the countries intermediate between Northumbria and Wessex fell under the power of Offa; and the King of Wessex, Burhred, sought his alliance. Offa gave Burhred his daughter in marriage, and assistance in driving from Wessex his rival (a name far greater than his) Ecgberht, who fled to the court of Charles the Great. The protection there given to the fugitive did not, however, destroy the friendly relations between Offa and Charles.

There are, indeed, three links which in a special way seem to unite the England of this epoch with the great Frank Empire: first from Northumbria comes Alcuin to the court of Charles, the intellectual prime minister, as he has been called, of the Frank king; then there is the correspondence between the Mercian Offa and Charlemagne; and thirdly, the flight of the West Saxon Ecgberht, with much of the future hope of England upon his shoulders, to the Frankish court.

But the close connection between the lands upon both sides of the Channel is best shown by the introduction of a new currency into England, clearly modelled upon the contemporary currency of Francia, which itself was comparatively new; for it came in with the house of Heristal, about the middle of the eighth century.[1]

In many private ways the bonds of union between the neighbouring countries were being drawn closer during this peaceful and prosperous interlude. The English lover of travel was not obliged to wait for the high promptings of missionary zeal. The vagrant spirit still put on a religious garb, as most of the acts of those days did, but it was one not so onerous as missionary work. The Englishman's grand tour of those days was a pilgrimage to Rome. Bede tells us how

[1] Keary, *Catalogue of English Coins in the British Museum*, vol. i. Introd. p. xxiii.

many of the upper class in his day undertook it. A long list of pilgrim kings is preserved.[1] One incidental event of Offa's reign is a witness to the prevalence of this habit. He purchased a piece of land in Flanders in order to build a house where the English pilgrims on landing might find refreshment. From which we see that the Continental route of those days was rather the Dover to Ostend route than the Dover to Calais. More probably, however, most of the English ships sailed from the Thames.

It was noteworthy how up to this period whatever wars might still rage on land—even between Christian and Christian as in this country—the sea seemed by general consent set apart to be a home of peace.

Their days were too long gone for men to remember the Saxon piracies in the English Channel, or to take notice of a few chance revivals of piracy in later times, as by King Hygelác, and others of less account, in waters more remote. The sea seemed to be consecrated as the home of peace when the Irish missionaries entrusted themselves to its waves, and to have remained so since, as in every land monastery after monastery rose upon its shores. So far as men knew (for what could they guess of the thoughts of the Baltic nations?), no hostile feeling existed between any people separated by the sea; none between the nations on the opposite sides of the English Channel, although the Franks were fierce enough against our kinsfolk in Old Saxony. And though we were hostile enough to the Celts of our own island—British and Picts—the feeling died down when it reached the seashore, and towards the Celts of Ireland we had nothing but goodwill. Once, and once only, an English king had sent an army into Ireland, and had 'miserably harried that harmless people who have always been so friendly to the English,' says Beda,[2] who counts the destruction which shortly overtook the same king (Ecgfrith), a direct retribution for this impious act.

[1] See above, p. 101.

[2] *Misere vastavit gentem innoxiam et nationi Anglorum semper amicissimam* (*H. E.*, iv. 26). The words sound strange, it must be owned, to modern ears.

Merchants, too, doubtless, were passing now and again over the German Ocean, where the Frisians were already beginning to anticipate the history of the Netherlands, and were developing into the great commercial people of Northern Europe. Yet if we are to believe the report of later days, there were not wanting in the midst of all this prosperity heavenly warnings of future change. Fiery dragons were seen careering through the air, fit type of the dragon-ships which would ere long be seen on every northern sea, which had perhaps even now left the safe harbours of the Vik (the Skager Rack), and tempted the open ocean. In a miraculous manner some men's garments were found suddenly marked with a cross, as if to show they were destined to martyrdom. And Alcuin, returning about this time on a brief visit to his beloved York, beheld a portentous sign: a rain of blood descending upon the minster.[1]

A.D. 789. But more real and unmistakable was the portent of three keels which one summer day of 789 put into a harbour of the Dorset coast.[2] They were thought to be merchant vessels, and the Port Reeve, good easy man, rode down from the king's vill to the shore to exact his port dues.

But they were not merchants; they were 'northern men,' the 'first ships of the Danish men that sought the English land' so far as we can ascertain, they were the first northern pirates who had appeared on any Christian shore since the days of Hugleik; the precursors of an endless series of future raiders.[3]

[1] Jaffé, *Mon. Alc.*, p. 182 (*Rer. Ger. Bib.* vi.).

[2] *A S. Chron.*, A.D. 787.

[3] The interpretation of the expression, 'iii. Scypu Norðmanna of Hæreðaland' has been the subject of more controversy than any other passage in the *Chronicle*. Hærethaland has been interpreted as Hardeland in Jutland (Munch), and Hordaland in Norway (Maurer, Storm). The word does not occur in the best MSS. of the Chronicle, and in the passage the ships are said to be the first ships of the Danish men which sought the land of England. Steenstrup's ingenious suggested emendation 'oferhærian þæt land' must be noted (*Normannerne* ii. 19, and *cf.* H. Hunt, 787). I cannot accept Mr. Howorth's suggestion that the date of this raid is subsequent to the attack on Lindisfarne (*Trs. of Roy. Hist. Soc.* vii.), though it is accepted by the editors of the *Corp. Poet. Bor.* The above-quoted sentence seems to me fatal to it; and as with Steenstrup I believe these raiders to have been Danes, there are no difficulties in the supposition of an attack

They drew their arms, killed the Port Reeve,[1] took, we may, believe, some trifle of booty, and then sailed away into the unknown whence they had come, and were heard of no more.

Four years after the descent upon the Dorset coast a far more terrible Viking raid took place in Northumbria. The scene of it was that island of Lindisfarne (nearly opposite the old Bernician capital Bamborough), where the first Columban monastery had been built. We saw how Aidan, the Columban missionary to Northumbria, had followed the example of his master, and as *he* made his holy island, his Delos, in Iona, so had Aidan chosen this Holy Isle of Lindisfarne. It was not quite an island, for it was united at low tide by a strip of land, which, twice a day, the turbulent surge covered and laid bare—'Qui videlicet locus, accedente et recedente rheumate, bis quotidie instar insulæ maris circumluitur undis, bis renudato littore contiguus terræ redditur.'[2] A.D. 793 (or 4).

It was on this Lindisfarne that in 793 a Viking fleet fell.[3] By chance? We cannot tell. Some have thought that one of the rival factions which at that moment divided the kingdom of Northumbria invited them into the land. We find plenty of other instances of such occurrences. But I do not know that there is adequate evidence for it in this case. Now first was seen in all its terror the *Furor Normannorum.* The pirates landed on the island; of the monks of Lindisfarne some they took prisoners, some they drove into the sea. They rifled, and then burnt the monastery and its shrine. And a cry of horror rose over Europe, where a thousand religious and literary associations connected with the names of Aidan and Cuthbert and Bede, and the great days of the Northumbrian

on Wessex. I confess, however, that the appearance of these 'three keels' which figure so often in Teutonic migration legends (*e.g.*, Goths, Jutes) gives the account a somewhat mythic air.

[1] Æthelweard gives us his name—Beaduheard. [2] Beda, *H. E.* iii. 3.

[3] *A S. Chr., s.a.*; Sym. Dun., *H. D. E.* c. v. The dates at this period are very uncertain. It is quite possible that this attack on Lindisfarne fell in the same year as the attacks on Glamorganshire and Rechru mentioned below. *Cf.* also *An. Ult.* 793 (=794), which Steenstrup, *o.c.*, takes to refer to the attacks on England, Skeene, *C. S.*, to attacks on the northern islands of Scotland. The first view seems to me the most reasonable.

Church were linked about the spot. Our imagination, which fails to answer to the meagre accounts of the raid which have come down to us, awakes somewhat as we read the letters in which Alcuin mourns over the outrage.[1] 'Three centuries and a half have we and our forefathers been here in this fair Britain, and never before has such a horror fallen upon the land as has now come upon us at the hands of the heathen. Nor has anything like their mode of navigation been heard of before. See the Church of St. Cuthbert, drenched with the blood of the priests of God, reft of all its treasures; the noblest spot in all Britain given over to be a prey to the heathen. There, where after the departure of Paulinus from York, Christianity took a new beginning among our people—it seems as if a beginning were to be made of misery and war. Who would not be afeared? Who would not weep as for the enslavement of his country?'

The calamity was new and strange. But Alcuin took in its aspects at a glance, and saw that it would not remain an isolated one. He wrote especially to two monasteries closely connected with Lindisfarne and with each other—one at Wearmouth, the other upon the Jarrow. These two houses were linked monasteries under one foundation. They were founded by Bendict Biscop. To us they have nearer and more real associations even than the home of Cuthbert and of Aidan. For Monkwearmouth was the spiritual birthplace and Jarrow was the abiding home, and made the narrow world of the father of English history and English literature. The eyes which could look forward and backward along the stream of time, and had learnt to measure events so justly, had perhaps never seen any earthly prospect save the country which for a few miles stretched between the precincts of Jarrow monastery and the monastery at Monkwearmouth,[2] where now the Wear and Tyne roll their polluted waters to the sea, and all the land lies under the curse of smoke and the din of forges; where then

[1] *Ep. Alc.* 22 (Jaffé, *Bib. Rer. Ger.* vol. vi.).

[2] There is no evidence in support of the travels (*e.g.*, to Rome) ascribed by later tradition to Beda.

the monks of St. Peter and St. Paul tilled their fields, and their shepherds guarded their sheep.

No warnings from agencies natural or supernatural, from Alcuin or from the fiery dragons in the sky, could serve to put these houses in a position to defy the Vikings. And on Jarrow the pirates fell the year after their attack on Lindisfarne and burned it. The crew went back to their ship and sailed on to Wearmouth. This would next have fallen, but, say the chroniclers, St. Cuthbert now revenged himself for the desecration of his shrine. He sent a storm upon the fleet, and the heathen's boats, which in these early Viking days were light craft enough, were driven ashore and wrecked. Their leader was killed in the affray; the crews were drowned or scattered, and fell an easy prey to the vengeance of the peasantry, and the vengeance we may be sure was not mitigated. We may guess that many were tortured and that few escaped. And so it was that this attack upon the north of England ceased almost as suddenly as it had begun; and despite the heavenly warnings the full force of the Viking fury did not fall upon England till the lifetime of a generation had passed. **A.D. 794.**

Next year, however, a fresh fleet appeared in a fresh quarter, in Glamorganshire.[1] The king of South Wales and his mountaineers proved a match for the sea-rovers, who, giving up their attempt upon that country, set sail across St. George's Channel, and for the first time sighted the coast of Ireland—a country destined for long years to be the chief mark of their attacks. Near the coast of what is now Dublin County, a little to the north of Dublin Bay, lay a small island called Rechru or Rechrain, containing like most of the Irish islands its community of monks, its shrine in the midst, and its treasures, no doubt, of gold and jewellery within the shrine. It was a monastery which owed its foundation to Columba himself, and which had always been a favourite with the saint. The Viking fleet, strong 120 sail,[2] warned perhaps **A.D. 795.**

[1] *Gwent. Chron.* s.a. 795 (Publ. of Cambrian Arch. Ass.).
[2] *War of the Gaedhill*, &c., iv. (a. 795, Todd).

by their failure on the mainland of Glamorganshire and the previous failure at Monkwearmouth (if any knew of that) reverted to the tactics with which they had begun; and which, for long years, generally marked their descent upon a new coast. They first of all took possession of an island which they could hold in security. In the present case they fell upon Rechru, treating it as they had treated Lindisfarne. 'There was a burning of the island of Rechrain, and horrid ravage and harrying to want and desolation.'[1] Then they made a lodgment on the island, using it hereafter as a *point d'appui* for attacks upon the mainland. And the place as it changed its masters changed likewise its name. It was Rechru, a Celtic word of uncertain etymology; it is now Danish, Lamb-ay—the Lamb Island.

The plunderers rejoicing in their new-found world of adventure, this unexplored sea between Ireland and England,[2] crossed back a year or two after to Man, or rather to a little island lying close beside the larger one and then called Innispatrick—St. Patrick's isle.[3] The name was a relic of the early missionary labours of the Irish Church. Now, like Rechru, it had to change it and put on the one which it now bears—a name more consonant with the changed times, a Danish name in place of a Celtic one, a name not suggestive of peaceful labours but of war's alarms, Holm Peel—the island of the watch tower.

A.D. 798.

In the first years of the ninth century the religious world of Western Christendom suffered a new and bitter blow by the destruction of the monastery of Iona. Hy was first attacked in 802[4] apparently by a fleet which had sailed up St. George's Channel and which, after it had done this evil deed, is lost to our sight in the far north. But in 806 it was again attacked[5] by a fleet—per-

A.D. 802.

A.D. 806.

[1] *An. Ult.*, 794 (795?); *An. Four Masters*, 790. The dates of the Irish Chronicles are often even more wide of the mark than the dates of the English Chronicle.

[2] Cf. *Ult.* 797.

[3] *An. Ult.* 797, 798. Todd, *War*, &c., &c., Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, cf. *Four M.* 793.

[4] *F. M.* 797; *An. Ult.* 801. The date 781 in *Ann. Inisf.* is erroneous.

[5] *F. M.* 801; *An. Ult.* 804.

haps by the same Vikings—southward bound, and with much greater fury than before. The whole monastery was destroyed and all the monks were slain to the number of sixty-eight.

It was now 243 years since Columba had fixed his home upon this little island, whence he and his disciples had travelled, as we have described them travelling, from island to island and from shore to shore, founding fresh monasteries, making fresh converts. Since then the Columban Church, and Hy with it, had fallen greatly below their ancient renown. We have seen in what manner the former had become a heretical church. One by one the children of the Columban Church, that in Northumbria, the church of the Picts, had conformed to the Roman practice. Naitan, king of the Picts, dealt a heavy blow to Iona when on Scone Hill, 'the Hill of Belief,' he renounced his error upon these points.[1] A heavier blow still was struck when Constantine I. prepared to transfer the mother church of Scotland from Hy to Dunkeld—from Delos to Delphi as it were—in the interior of the country.[2] Iona had indeed ere now itself conformed: but grudgingly and too late. What it had lost in fame is shown by this. The proper number of monks even for a moderate establishment was 150. But when this thrice famous Hy was destroyed by the Danes it mustered only 68 cœnobites. This burning gave to Iona, for a time, its *coup de grace*. Though the Vikings carried off all they could find they left what (as we may guess) the Christians deemed its greatest treasure, the remains of the founder. But it was felt that this western island was too exposed a place to be left any longer in the possession of such precious relics; and the body of Columba was carried to Kells, in Ireland, where a stone church—a rare object in those days—was built expressly to contain it.[3]

A.D. 710.

Some tribute of regret was, however, we may well believe, paid to this cradle of the Columban Church—and is due even

[1] Beda, *H. E.* v. 21; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, i. 280.

[2] Constantine began but did not complete the Dunkeld Church.

[3] The relics were carried back to Iona a century later. Part of Columba's relics appear to have been afterwards transferred to Dunkeld.

from us. The island is described to us.[1] 'In the centre a plain extending across it in the narrowest part from the eastern to the western sea, presenting apparently fertile land well adapted for agriculture or pasture. In the middle a small green hillock surmounted by a circle of stones. North of this plain, upon the barren shore, a tract of wilder ground, consisting of small grassy patches or dells, alternating with rocky elevations. These culminate in the highest elevation of the island now called Dunii. And on the north shore a strip of low land, extending from the base of the hill to the sea and terminating at the N.E. end of the island in a strip of the purest white sand, the scene of a cruel slaughter of the monks by the Danes.'[2]

Thus had the sea between Alban and Ireland become a veritable corsair's home. Many of the atrocities of this time are no doubt buried for ever in oblivion. For when history once more throws its light upon the western coasts and islands of Scotland we see Norsemen everywhere settled in them, and those countless homes of the Columban monks have disappeared. It is the same in Ireland. We can but pick out the record of one or two of the numberless descents upon the religious communities. We need not much regret this. Had we the full list of the achievements of the Vikings it would read only like a continual repetition of the same thing—the same scene of rapine and slaughter.

And now we find the Vikings sailing round to the other side of Ireland—the new Odysseuses—venturing to earth's very limits. A.D. 807, the year after the fall of Hy, was the year of the first of their raids upon the *western* coast of Ireland; the first time, too, that they landed upon the mainland of this country. The Vikings first plundered Innishmurray, off the Sligo coast, and thence they harried inland some little way into Roscommon county. What may have been the thoughts of the dreamy cœnobites in these far shores and islands when the robbers from unknown quarters of the world burst upon their solitudes, we can only guess. After this fashion,

A.D. 807.

[1] Skene, *C. S.* ii. 89.

[2] For a fuller description of Iona see Reeve's *Adamnan*, First Ed.

unwillingly enough, were they made members of the body of Christian Europe and dragged once more into the stream of European politics.

IV.

On the continent, meanwhile, though Saxony was by no means wholly subdued, her future struggles were sporadic and intermittent; and from this time forward the Franks were in a position to come into pretty close relationship with the Danes upon their side of the North Sea. Certainly embassies once or twice passed between the two countries. But during the next two years or so following the baptism of Widukind, Charlemagne's attention was a good deal called away in other directions. There were wars against the Avars; a domestic conspiracy to put down; finally there was the position of the Holy Father at Rome, which was growing day by day more perilous, between the hostility of the Lombard princes outside, and treachery within his gates.

Pope Leo III. who had long been on ill terms with the partisans of the Lombard dynasty, had, as was fondly believed throughout Frankland, sustained a last proof of their enmity in the outbreak of a conspiracy in his own household which the Lombard party was supposed to have fomented. During a solemn ceremonial in Rome certain relatives of the Pope, falling upon the procession at the head of which he rode, seized the person of Leo, treated him with every indignity, and finally, it was said, they cut out his tongue and put out his eyes. But almost immediately after (such was the belief) the Pope's sight and speech were restored to him by a miracle. He escaped from Italy and came to throw himself upon the protection of Charles. Charles stood forth as the champion of Christianity and the protector of the Vicar of Christ, **A.D. 800.** and we know what great event followed the return of Charles with the Pope into Italy, in the year 800. One incidental notice occurring in this *annus mirabilis* of the imperial coronation concerns us here. Charles, we are told, passed some portion of the year in a visitation of the shores of the Northern

Ocean (the Frisian islands) which pirates had been ravaging and threatening[1]; and no doubt he made dispositions for the defence of the coast and the building of a fleet. On this last matter his thoughts had long been turned.

The pirate fleets were, we may guess, despatched by the successor of Siegfred, a much more truculent and perhaps much more powerful king, Godfred (or Godröd), who a year or two later appears before us lying ready with his fleet and army at Sleswick, while Charles was transporting the Saxons away from their homes on his border and giving these lands to the Abodriti.[2] Four years later this king declared open war against the Frankish Emperor, by attacking with great determination the Abodriti, the allies of the Franks.[3] He compassed (by treachery, says Einhard) the death of Thrasuco (Drasco), dux or king of that people, and laid a part of their land under tribute.[4] Charles sent assistance to his vassal, and part of Godfred's army was cut to pieces during a siege of one of the Wendish strongholds; his nephew Reginald was slain. Godfred expected that the hostility of the Frankish Emperor would go further; for he retired behind Schleswig, and drew the lines of a great entrenchment, the Danish dyke,[5] across the frontiers of his country, from the east sea to the lower Eyder. Charles, on his part, we are distinctly told, *had* formed the design of attacking the Danes in their own country. 'But whether it were that Divine Providence was not on our side, that He might try Israel by the hands of these men, as the Scripture saith, or that our sins rose up

A.D. 808.

[1] There is one notice of a Viking attack on the coast of Aquitaine in 799, *Mon. Alc.*, p. 512, an event for which I confess I cannot account. See Jaffé's note, *l.c.*

[2] In A.D. 804 Charlemagne removed a portion of the Trans-Albingian Saxons from their territories, and handed these over to the Abodriti, who thus separated the Danes from their old allies. Godfred on this occasion proposed a meeting between himself and Charlemagne upon the Elbe, but never appeared. Einhard, s. a. 804.

[3] On the subject of Godfred's nationality see Steenstrup's *Indledn. i Nor.*, p. 68 *sqq.*

[4] Einhard, *Ann.*; *Chron. Moiss.* (P. i. 303).

[5] Not the same dyke known at a later date as the Danish dyke, which was constructed by Queen Thyra.

against us'[1]—all Charles's attempts were unsuccessful, and finally he abandoned the enterprise.

At this Godfred, who had not been idle, took in his turn the initiative, and despatched, in A.D. 810, against the Frisian coast a fleet of two hundred sail—by far the largest which had been heard of up till now. The fleet ravaged some of the islands off North Frisia, landed a while upon the mainland, and wrung from the inhabitants a payment of one hundred pounds of silver. Grown insolent at this success, Godfred proceeded farther to gather together an army; of this he prepared to take the lead in person, while he proclaimed to Charles and to all whom it might concern, that he would soon be heard of at the gates of imperial Aix-la-Chapelle (a prophecy which was realized by another Godfred seventy-six years later). Charles hurried up to meet him, and fixed his camp at the confluence of the Alar and the Weser. Godfred, on his side, was upon the Saxon border.[2] But there, as the Danish king was flying his hawks on the banks of the Elbe, a servant whom he had ill-treated (or some say a son whose mother he had deserted), came upon him unawares, and with one blow severed his body clean in two.[3] And with the death of this king ended all present thought among the Danes of coming to an encounter with the Frankish army. Godfred's nephew and successor,[4] Hemming, withdrew the army far into

A.D. 810.

[1] Mon. Sangall. (Pertz, ii. 757).

[2] In the Mosel country, says the monk of St. Gall, confusing this Godfred with the one who harassed the Mosel country seventy years later.

[3] Einhard, *Ann.* 810. The death of this Godfred is ascribed to Godröd the Yngling.

Varð Goðröd inn Göfogláti
lómi beittr, sás fyr löngo vas:
ok um rað at ölom stilli
höfud heipt räkt at hilmi dró:
ok laun-svik inn lóm-geði
Aso árr af jöfri bar:
ok buðlungr á beði fornom
Stiflo-sundz of stunginn vas.

Ynglingatal restored, xxvi. *C. P. B.* ii. 656. See note [3] on previous page.

[4] According to Saxo Godfred was succeeded by Olaf, Olaf by Hemming. Bk. ix.

the inaccessible woods of Jutland, and Charles, we are told, shed tears at the thought that his enemy had escaped him this second time. 'Why was I not deemed worthy,' he cried, 'to see how my Christian arm would have made play with these monkeys?'[1] The time would come, if not in his day.

And for a contrasted picture take this other—not, it is true, perfectly authenticated—from the monk of St. Gallen.

'Once Charles arrived by chance at a certain maritime town of Gallia Narbonensis.[2] While he was sitting at dinner, and had not been recognized by the townspeople, some northern pirates came to carry on their depredations in that very port. When the ships were perceived some thought they were Jewish merchants, some that they were Africans, some Bretons. But the wise king, knowing from the shape and swiftness of the vessels what sort of crews they carried, said to those about him, "These ships bear no merchandize, but cruel foes." At these words all the Franks rivalled each other in the speed with which they rushed to attack the boats. But it was useless. The Northmen hearing that *there* stood the man whom they were wont to call Charles the Hammer, were afraid lest all their fleet should be taken in the port, and should be broken in pieces; and their flight was so rapid, that they withdrew themselves not only from the swords, but even from the eyes of those who wished to catch them. The religious Charles, however, seized by a holy fear, rose from the table, and looked out of the window towards the East, remaining long in that position, his face bathed in tears. No one ventured to question him: but turning to his followers he said, "Know ye why I weep? Truly I fear not that these will injure *me*. But I am

[1] 'Cum cynocephalis illis.' Mon. Sangall, ii. 13 (Pertz, ii. 757; Bouquet, v. 140).

[2] It is certain that in the days of Charlemagne no northern pirates had made their way into the Mediterranean. Either, therefore, our author (the monk of St. Gall) is mistaken about the place, or (what is perhaps the most reasonable supposition) he has transferred to the Vikings a story originally connected with the Mohammedan pirates, whose depredations in Italy and in the Gulf of Lyons were scarcely less terrible than those of the Vikings in northern France. Some of these Corsairs had already been seen on the coast of Gaul. Einhard, *Vita. Car. I.* i. 17 (Pertz ii.).

deeply grieved that in my lifetime they should have been so near landing on these shores, and I am overwhelmed with sorrow as I look forward and see what evils they will bring upon my offspring and their people."'[1]

Under these foreshadowings the eighth century drew to a close, and the ninth (that fatal era) opened. The Vikings had now been seen, but not much more than seen, upon most of the lands where in future their ships would be best known—

> 'Aghast and pale,
> From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
> The track of thy destroying bark,
> Thy thrice accursed sail—'

Upon the Frisian coast (as we have seen); possibly as far south as Aquitaine; on the southern and northern coasts of England; on both sides of St. George's Channel. But there was not much as yet to attract the attention of Europe at large, still less to cause serious alarm. We might compare signs such as these to the riots which precede a revolution—of no moment, of infinite moment, to the careless and unprepared. For the present the central state of Christendom was held in the strong grasp of Charles the Great; could it but remain so! But the emperor only outlived his truculent foe King Godfred four years, dying in A.D. 814.

Howbeit, though this new storm of invasion from the North seemed already to have begun to blow round almost every coast, the clouds for a while gathered themselves together again, and leaving the other countries of Europe, drifted over westward, and fell with all their fury upon Ireland. The awful prophecy contained in the fiery dragons and the rain of blood was not fulfilled, at least not yet; for the space of another generation England was left almost at peace.

[1] Mon. Sangall, ii. 14.

CHAPTER V.

CHARACTER OF THE VIKINGS.

I.

On both sides of Europe, as we see, the Scandinavian people were beginning to make themselves known; on the East because the Empire of Christendom had once more advanced to their borders, on the West because they had now brought their art of navigation to a higher perfection.

And here we have occasion to note how slow working are the events and the forces which mould our history, how true is that classical image of Fate or Nemesis advancing *pede claudo*. The northern nations had learned the use of the sail from the Romans: their word *segl*, like our *sail*, and all Teutonic names for the same thing, from the Latin *sagulum*. This use of the sail they had learnt, it seems probable, very early in the Christian era; not in the days of Tacitus, for he says expressly that the ships of the Suiones had no sails, but soon after. Yet it was only now in the eighth century that the full effect of this discovery came to light. The Scandinavians had, as we saw, preserved their art of boat-building, little changed, since far pre-historic days, the days of the *hållristningar*.

Even now the conservativeness of ancient habit fought against the spirit of change in them, and the general construction of their boats remained what it had long been; that is to

say, they were admirably fitted for the comparatively safe navigation of the Baltic, but to our modern notions very unseaworthy.

The history of boat-building in the North, subsequent to the days of Tacitus, is scantily preserved by one or two discoveries of buried craft. One found in Nydams moos, in Denmark, belongs to a period earlier than the outbreak of the Viking age.[1] Two others found near Christiania, and now preserved in the Christiania museum, are of a later date, probably of the eleventh century.[2] The best preserved of these, the Gókstad ship, has been used as a burial ship; that is to say, the body of a dead warrior has been placed therein for burial. This custom of using ships as a kind of immense coffins long prevailed among the Scandinavian nations; it prevailed not only in the days when they buried their dead, but earlier in days when they burned them. An Arab merchant who travelled in Novgorod, or Gardaríki, as the Scandinavians called it, in the tenth century—in days, that is to say, when that country was a Scandinavian (Swedish) kingdom—has left us a curious description of the funeral rites of these people. They always burned their dead; but the body was first placed in a boat made for the purpose.[3]

We cannot tell whether or no the Gókstad boat was made only for purposes of funeral; but it was more probably an old sea-going vessel. Like the boats of the stone-carvings, like the boats of Tacitus's Suiones, it was built alike at both ends, so that it could, as Tacitus says of the earlier northern craft, be propelled with equal ease in either direction. What we notice most about the build of the Christiania boats—and the same may be said of the Nydam boat so far as we can tell—is that they were very shallow. We see, in fact, that they had followed the old tradition. The Gókstad ship is seventy-five feet in length and sixty feet along the keel. Her greatest breadth of

[1] Montelius, *Kultur Schwedens in vorhistorischer Zeit*, p. 110.

[2] One found at Tune, one at Gókstad, both in the Christiania museum.

[3] Ibn Haukal, *Kitab el Mashálik wa-l Memálik* (Book of Roads and Kingdoms) [Tr. by Ouseley].

beam is fifteen feet; but this narrows away towards either end. Her depth at the broadest part is little more than three and a half feet. Such vessels were admirably fitted to run in and out of creeks and bays: they were, *par excellence*, vik-boats (wick-boats) as well as Viking boats. They had no fixed steering-gear, but, like the modern whaling-boat, could be steered by an oar from the side—the star-board or steer-board. In the creeks and small bays, through narrow channels and up rivers, the boats would pass or lie snug, often quite unperceived by the landsmen close at hand; and the North-men could choose their own moment for a raid upon the inhabitants. We must suppose that the earlier Viking boats were smaller than those of which we hear descriptions in the Sagas, or than the Christiania boats. In the Sagas we read of vessels having thirty benches of rowers (sixty rowers in all), or of a still greater number. Still, even in Saga days fifteen seats seems to have been a good average number for a 'long ship.'[1] The Gókstad ship had sixteen oars a-side. We may take it that this is about the extreme number for a Viking ship in the earlier days. I have spoken of benches of rowers; but it must be confessed that in the Christiania ship no traces of seats have been found, and it would seem that in it the men rowed standing. Taking two men to relieve each other at each oar, we should get sixty men at least in these ships. It is quite likely that the fighting men in a ship outnumbered those at any moment engaged in rowing by at least three to one, which would give not less than 120 men to a vessel of the size of the Christiania boat. In the Saga of Olaf the Saint, for example, a 'long ship' of thirty-two benches is spoken of as containing two hundred men. But it has been already said that when we hear in the early Viking days of a considerable fleet, we are not to multiply the number of ships mentioned by another 100 or 120. Undoubtedly the great majority of the craft in early

[1] In the later Saga age there were apparently in use two sorts of ships, 'long ships' for coast or genuine 'wick' service, and a stronger sort of sea-going vessel. We may be pretty sure that the 'long ship' of those times is the best representative of the Viking ship of our earlier period.

times were quite small boats, with nothing like the thirty-two oars of the Gókstad ship.

We have said that these boats were, taken as a whole, not very seaworthy; and that they were essentially rowing boats, not sailing boats, and in this respect resembled the ships of antiquity. We scarcely ever hear, even in the later Viking age, of double ranks of rowers, such as those from which the biremes got their names, and never of triple ranks. Neither biremes nor triremes, we may be pretty sure, were known in Viking ship-building during *our* period. The mast was a mere adjunct, with all the appearance of an addition to the original plan, very often but ill-supported by the light-built ship. There was never more than one mast to a vessel. It carried one heavy cross-beam, with a single large square sail. The mast could easily be lowered, and generally was so before an engagement; at such a time, therefore, all the manœuvring was done by the rowers.

We must not, then, in picturing the ships of the northern sea-rovers, think of those craft which we now see, generally laden with wood, sailing about the coast of Norway. These are heavy vessels with square sterns. But we must think rather of the shallow boats, pointed at each end, which are rowed about the lakes, adding to them high, curved prows and stern-posts, and sails. The last were probably like the fine square sails of the modern sailing craft, which, though they have not the beauty of the bird-like felucca sail, have a certain grandeur, a certain impressiveness indescribable to those who have never seen them coming slowly round some headland or appearing above some low island on the Norway coast. The high prows of the Viking ships were carved into the shape of a fantastic animal, most often into the likeness of a dragon or worm. The most famous among such ships in Scandinavian history was the ship of Olaf Tryggvesson, called *The Long Worm*. But in fact this device was so common that the expression 'dragon-ship' is in Old Norse literature almost convertible with 'war-ship.'

Even to us a ship seems more alive than any other thing

that is not really so; the last traces of the mythopœic spirit linger in the mouth of sailors when they talk about their ships. What, then, must have been the feeling in days when the mythopœic spirit was very far from dead? Must not the dragon-ship, with its white wings spread, have been to the Norseman really a living thing, really a mythic animal, with powers of its own? And what, too, may have been to the Christians these war-ships, whose coming was foretold by terrible signs and fiery shapes careering through the air?[1]

II.

In the days of Tacitus the Northern nations were scarcely distinguishable from their Teuton brethren on the Continent; that is to say, they were not distinguishable from the Teutons of the Eastern Baltic—the Goths, for example, who lived at the mouth of the Vistula.[2] But the Goths and the other Germans had long ago disappeared from North-east Germany; and by this time the Scandinavians had acquired a separate speech and an individual character. It becomes necessary, therefore, for us to ask, What was the character of this race, with which Christendom had now begun a more than hundred years' war? Once had the voice of a Christian missionary been heard among the woods of Denmark; once, and had then grown silent. Once had a Danish king adventured into the Northern Ocean and sailed round to the mouth of the Meuse. Some little commerce doubtless there was between Denmark and Frisia; but intercourse of no kind sufficient to seriously affect the knowledge or the ignorance of Christendom touching the Scandinavians. Of the Vikings' beliefs we need not speak in this place. Those that they retained were no doubt in the main the beliefs of the Old Teutons, such as we have already attempted to sketch them. The Scandinavian creed as a whole found

A.D. circ. 695.

[1] Human sacrifice was made either to the ship itself or to some divinity when the boat was launched, by binding the victims to the rollers over which ran the keel. It was called 'hlunnroð' (the roller-reddening). *Cf. C. P. B.* i. 410, ii. 349.

[2] See above, p. 16, note [2], and p. 71, note [2].

literary expression at a date later than that to which our present history stretches. It will be best not to speak of that until we come to the period of its creation. But of the personal character of the Norsemen it is advisable to say something.

We should have, it is to be feared, to eliminate the milder elements which after a century of contact with Christian Europe have crept into the character of the Viking hero, as he appears in the heroic ballads of the North. Still, we must not think of him as we do of the modern fillibuster—the worst offspring of a higher civilization. *Corruptio optimi pessima:* the Viking was no worse and no better than the society from which he sprang. Of his courage not much needs to be told. Yet we cannot easily realize how all-embracing that courage was. A trained soldier is often afraid at sea, a trained sailor lost if he has not the protecting sense of his own ship beneath him. The Viking ventured upon unknown waters in ships very ill-fitted for their work. He had all the spirit of adventure of a Drake or a Hawkins, all the trained valour and reliance upon his comrades that mark a soldiery fighting a militia — that of Cæsar's legionaries in the Gauls, or Alva's troops in the Low Countries. There are some manœuvres which a semi-savage valour seems better capable of executing than the best trained of modern armies. The Vikings preserved and improved upon a manœuvre in favour with the ancient Germans,[1] in a way that illustrates very forcibly the fineness of their quality as soldiers. This manœuvre was the sham flight. When all day long they had been in vain attacking the serried ranks of their adversaries, they would at a preconcerted signal take to flight. Their opponents rarely failed to follow them; and when they had thus been drawn from their position, the Northmen rallied again and charged them into destruction. I think any general would admit that there have been but few disciplined armies in the world's history which could be trusted to execute such a manœuvre as this; that with the vast majority of troops the

[1] *Cf. Germania*, c. 6.

signal to retreat in the face of an enemy would be fatal to the hopes of the day, even though the reasons for that retreat were well understood. And yet this sham flight became almost a special 'note' of the Viking battle. It was practised with success before York in A.D. 867; in Lincolnshire, near Kesteven, three years later; and in the battle of Wilton two years later again (A.D. 872). The same sham flight or something like it caused the death in France of France's bravest defender, Robert the Strong; and two hundred years afterwards the same manœuvre, put in practice by the descendants of these same Vikings, proved fatal to the old English monarchy at Hastings.[1]

They were as valiant in defence as in attack. When hardest pressed they set up the impregnable wall of the shield-burg (skjaldborg), which was a formation to be compared to the English square at Waterloo, only it was circular and not square; a sort of low tower of men holding their shields before them, overlapping as with the Roman *testudo;* some men, therefore, it is to be presumed, kneeling, some standing above them.

What makes the military achievements of the Vikings the more remarkable is that they were not organized by any despotic power above; they lived under a constitution which was more republican than monarchic. Their leader was generally called a king, but was frequently one only in name—

Solo rex verbo, sociis tamen imperitabat [2]—

as a wretched poet of these days sings. Sometimes if he ordered an attack, sometimes if he ordered the raising of a siege, they refused to obey. Nevertheless, they had the wisdom to impose upon themselves a tolerably strict camp-law, and, we must believe, lived in general obedience thereto.[3]

With this indomitable courage went the darker vices of a

[1] For another (traditional) example *cf.* Dudo, *De mor. et act. pr. ducum Normanniæ*, ii. 4.

[2] Abbo, *Bel. Par. urbis*, v. 37; *cf.* Dudo, *o. c.* i. 11.

[3] On the Law named after Frode Frodegod, see Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, i. 30 *sqq.*, and York-Powell, *Grimm Centenary*, vii. The fragment preserved of this law is in Saxo, *Hist. Dan.* pp. 225–230, (Müller).

half-savage warlike people: a cruelty, or at least a carelessness of life, which spared no age nor sex. One of the Viking leaders got the nickname of Börn (Child), because he had been so tender-hearted as to try and stop the sport of his followers, who were tossing young children in the air and catching them upon their spears. No doubt his men laughed not unkindly at this fancy of his, and gave him the nickname above mentioned. For all this the Northmen do not seem as a rule to have employed torture, though they certainly did so at times ; for on one occasion we read of their impaling a number of their hostages—that most terrible of all forms of torture, and, alas! one of the commonest in history. One barbarous method of execution is said to have been invented in the north—the blood-eagle, [1] or spread-eagle: it meant the severing of a man's ribs from the backbone by blows of a hatchet, and other tortures needless to describe, but such as the victim could not have lived under for more than a minute.[2] Like most half-savages, the Vikings knew towards their enemies no honourable code; they were as treacherous and deceitful as they were brave and cruel.

But along with these fierce qualities there went another, very characteristic of the Northman, a vivid sense of humour. The Vikings and the Saga heroes had a schoolboy love of two things—nicknames and practical jokes. These nicknaming habits of the Scandinavian people were peculiar. All the early kings of Denmark, for instance, down to the fourteenth century, had their nicknames, sometimes personally characteristic only, as Harald Blue-tooth, or Svend Fork-beard, Eric Eye-good, Eric Glipping ('Blinking' Eric) ; at other times morally characteristic, as Erik Menved, 'But' Eric, Eric with the 'but,' or Eric Lam (Lamb), Erik Emun, ('Bragging' Eric), or Olaf Hunger ('Famine' Olaf). All royal lines have had *some* such

[1] Blóðörn.

[2] The most famous instance of the infliction of this punishment, the spread-eagle cut by Torf Einar on Halfdan Hálegg, Harald Fairhair's son, is no doubt apocryphal. The passage of the Orkneyinga (Vigfusson, *O. S.* p. 8, Rolls Ser.) in which this punishment is mentioned, suggests that it was a form of sacrifice.

soubriquets applied to their members; and of course the art of nicknaming is but the art of naming. Yet we see a great difference in comparing the Scandinavian wealth in nicknames with the paucity of other countries—and there is a difference in the character, too. One of our best royal nicknames, and quite in the Scandinavian vein, was John Lackland. Robert Courthose, is another of a simpler sort. But Geoffrey or Henry Plantagenet, William the Lion of Scotland, Henry the Lion of Germany—their soubriquets are mere heraldic names, taken from the badges on their helmets; and they show a lack in fancy and in quickness on the part of those who gave them. Henry the Fowler is not much better. One nickname, the best ever bestowed upon a monarch, is German, and characteristically German: 'Der Winter König,' (The Winter King). It has a humour of its own—a poetic, quasi-tragic humour like that of Goethe and Heine. It is, however, *toto divisum orbe* from the soubriquets of the Scandinavian kind.

The love of the northeners for practical jokes and the character of these practical jokes are amazing. A story told in the Jomsburg Viking Saga of the execution of a number of the Jomsburg Vikings, who had been captured by Earl Hakon, is a good instance. All the Jomsburg Vikings are described sitting on a log with their feet bound to it. One after another was beheaded there where he sat, without flinching, without winking, so the story says. At last the executioner came to one of them, Sigurd Buisson, who had very long and beautiful hair. As his turn came he cried out, 'I fear not death. But let no slave touch my hair, nor blood defile it.' So that one of the Norse men-at-arms stepped forward and held up his hair till the axe should fall. But Sigurd gave a sudden jerk and the axe fell, not on his neck, but on the Norseman's wrists, cutting off both his hands. This trick so delighted Eric, the son of Earl Hakon, that he obtained the reprieve of all the remaining Jomsburgers. There is another story, well enough known, of how king Æthelstan sent a sword as a present to Harald Haarfagr,[1] and when Harald took it the ambassador

[1] If this is our Æthelstan, Edward's son, then we must perforce bring

called out, 'Ah, now thou hast taken a sword from Æthelstan, and art become his man.' A few years after Harald dispatched one of his earls with his own young child Hakon, with orders to place the boy upon Æthelstan's knees. When the earl had succeeded in doing this he called out, 'Now thou art become *my* king's man, for thou hast received his child to foster.' And Harald would rather have had his child killed by Æthelstan than that the earl should have taken him back and spoilt the practical joke.

I do not know where we should find a modern parallel to such a character as I have described, unless it were in the Western States of America. There we should see the same recklessness, the same stoicism, something of the same rude magnanimity; we should find a code of honour, if not as strict, certainly as fantastic as the Viking's; and finally we should find a grim humour almost the exact counterpart of his.

Some writers, reluctant to look upon the Vikings, who had so much potential nobility in them, as mere pirates, have tried to bestow on their raids almost the character of a crusade—or anti-crusade. It seems tempting to believe that, as Charles's Saxon War may undoubtedly be reckoned the first crusade, so these Viking raids, which begin before that is over, are the reply of Heathendom thereto. 'You convert by fire and sword? we, too, can do something in that line.' I will not say that there may not have mingled this element in the first attacks of the Northmen—unconsciously; that the advance of Charles upon the Baltic shores may not have stirred the Scandinavian nations almost involuntarily to undertake their new adventures.

There was no other element of religious war than this unconscious one in the Viking attacks. On the whole they were only plundering expeditions, with scarcely any other conscious object at the outset than the amassing of treasure. Later on, when the weakness of the Christian states became more

down the date of Harald Fairhair some thirty years, as Vigfusson has done (*C. P. B.* ii. 487). Unfortunately his argument is largely based on the assumption that it could be no other Æthelstan; and Guthorm-Æthelstan would suit the facts better in many ways than Edward's son. There still remain, however, weighty facts which support Vigfusson's chronology.

apparent, thoughts of conquest and settlement supervened: thoughts of conquest first, which finally quieted down to thoughts of settlement.

But, on the other hand, the amassing of treasure had, for the Viking, a half-religious character which it is impossible for us in these days to understand. Between their days and ours the Feudal Age has intervened; feudalism rested all claim to dignity and nobility upon the possession of *land*, which even to this day seems to most of the nations once feudal a possession of quite a different kind from any other, whereas the amassing of specie, which is the work of the trading classes, is accounted vulgar by comparison. (I suppose among the Jews, who have never had any part in feudalism, no shadow of this feeling exists; and that it is here that the fundamental difference between our way of looking at things and theirs makes itself felt.)

But with all the nations who took part in the invasion of the Roman world—and even with those who stayed behind, but by sympathy shared in the adventures of their brethren—the idea for ever before their minds was of the treasure which was amassed somewhere in these lands—the treasure in *gold*. Volumes, we know, might be written of the wonderful part which the yellow metal has played in the history of the world. The Northmen themselves appear to have had some strange myth which represented *gold* as a witch-woman whom the gods sought to burn, only with the effect (of course) of refining the gold and making it more attractive and powerful.[1] All modern instances, as of the Spanish conquerors or of the English buccaneers (the descendants of the Vikings), would give a very inadequate notion of the effect of this treasure-seeking upon the Vikings themselves.

In the Middle Ages the Prince or Nobleman is the Land owner, *Land*-lord. As a King, he is King of the territory, not of the people—King of England, King of France, only *Roi des Français* in virtue of the Revolution. In the early days of

[1] Voluspâ 21 (Bugge). I am aware that Rydberg does not accept this interpretation. *T. M.* §§ 34-5.

Teuton conquest he was King of the Goths, of the Franks, of the Burgundians, of the Ring-Danes; and his character was expressed, at any rate in the north, by the name Ring-breaker, *i.e.* treasure-dispenser, (A.S. Beágabrytta, O.N. Baugbrota or Hringbrota); his personal fame and power depended chiefly upon the bands of *Gesellen* who accompanied him, who fed at his table, and who were attracted to his service by the treasure of which he had the disposal.

The Cosmology of the Edda gives an important place to the treasures of metal under the earth. Mîmir, the king of wisdom and of inspiration [Mîmir's draught], is also Hoddmimir or Treasure-Mîmir, the guardian of the hidden wealth of the world.

The whole plot of the Niebelungen legend turns on the possession of a mighty treasure whose acquisition is invested with the character of a religious duty, calling for the most heroic sacrifices. This was the feeling which moved men at the time when the Nibelungen legend was born. And for the same feeling we could hardly discover finer expression than in those lines at the end of *Beowulf*, where the hero thanks the Lord of Power for allowing him to crown his heroic life by the acquirement of the great treasure—

> Ic þara frætwa freán ealles þanc,
> Wuldurcyninge wordum sægde,
> Þas þæ ic móste mínum leodum,
> Ær swylt dæge swylc gestrýnan.[1]

The unbounded enthusiasm for battle and adventure which accompanied this life of treasure-seeking, which breathes in every line of the Eddic poetry, and which was in itself a kind of religion, is inexpressible by words. The Christian chroniclers give us the facts of the Viking raids—for this early period, they alone. But for the feelings which accompanied the adventurers

[1] For this treasure I, thanks to the Lord of All,
To the King of Glory in words express,
These that I might for my people,
Ere my death-day thus acquire. *Beowulf*, l. 2794 *sqq.*

We remember, too, how Frode's mill ground *Gold*, Peace, and Happiness for the world. *Grotakv.*

we must turn to the native literature of the north, in which the old spirit fully survives. In these poems, and in them only, the scene of battle seems to take shape, and there is a wild magnificence in the picture that rises before our eyes.

We see the dragon ships with grinning heads cleaving their way through the water, churning it up with their tarred oars. If near the shadow of the land the boat is followed, perhaps, by a friendly troop of ravens, ready to make their account in the coming slaughter. This bird the Northmen have taken for the symbol of their 'war-wagers,' and use for their banner; and here and there a wise man among the crew, who has learnt the language of birds, hears the ravens (like the 'Twa Corbies' of the Scottish ballad) telling each other where the enemy are and where the thickest of the fight and the greatest slaughter will be. Or, maybe, far overhead rides a flock of wild swans, in which the eye of faith discerns the bright warlike shield-maidens of Odin—the spae-women, or Norns, as they are called sometimes—who weave the web of victory and defeat.

> Vindom, vindom vef darraðar,
> Wind we, wind we the web of darts.

'The web is woven of the guts of men and weighed down with human heads. There are blood-stained darts to form the shafts; its stays are iron-wrought, with arrows shuttled. Strike with your swords this web of victory. . . .

'Now the web is woven and the field reddened. Bloody clouds are gathering over the sky. The air shall be dyed with the blood of men. Let us ride away fast on our bare-backed steeds, with our drawn swords in our hands, far away.'[1]

Then when the battle is joined. 'We hewed with swords. We reddened our swords far and wide. The moonlike shield was crimsoned [as the moon is when eclipsed], and shrilly screamed the swords. It was not like love-play when we were splitting of helms. Mighty was the onset. High rose the noise of the spears. . . . They rowed amain. They bent their backs to the oars. . . . The oar thongs split, the

[1] *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i. 282.

hawsers brake. . . . They hewed with their axes. . . . They put their fingers to the bowstrings and shot deftly. They covered themselves with their shields. So long as they remained alive they ceased not to hew with their swords, riving mail-coats and cleaving helmets. Through the morning they fought, through the first watches and till afternoon. The field was aswim with blood.'

Here is another passage in which, we may note, are mentioned nearly all the weapons in habitual use among the Northmen in the succeeding century, and probably also in use in this first Viking Age. 'The flying javelin bit; peace was belied there; the wolf was glad, and the bow was drawn; the bolts clattered; the spear-points bit; the flaxen bowstring bore the arrows out of the bow. He brandished the buckler on his arm, the rouser of the play of blades. . . . The prince drew the yew, the wound-bees flew.'

The last is a curious and expressive synonym for the buzzing arrows.[1]

Their shields hung round the bulwarks of the ship as it cleft the water—bright round shields, painted, say red or white,[2] mainly of wood, with metal bosses, or covered with a plate of metal. In every way the Vikings were better armed than most of those against whom they fought; better armed for defence in their ring-sarks or byrnies[3]; better for

[1] The weapons mentioned in the Thulor in *C. P. B.*, are Sword, Axe, Spear, Arrows, Bow, Shield, Helmet and Byrnie. The synonyms for Sword, and the parts of the Sword, are as many as for the other weapons put together; Shield comes next, then Arrows, then Axe and Helmet (tie).

[2] . . . diúpom ræðr hann kjólum,
roðnom röndom, rauðom skjöldom,
tjörgom örom, tjöldom drifnom.
Corpus Poet. B. i. 256, l. 18–20.

Knerrir kómo vestan kapps um lystir,
með gínandom höfdom, ok gröfnom tinglom;
hlaðnir vóro þeir hölða ok hvítra skjalda.
Ibid. l. 64–66.

[3] The mention of *byrnies* is very frequent in the Edda poetry, *cf. Grimnismál* 9 (Bugge), and the beautiful passage in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* 15. The byrnie is called a war-net (*vig-nest*) in *Helgakv. Hjor-*

attack with their swords and axes; better armed than the peasant who took his place in the Saxon *fyrd;* far better than the members of the Irish hosting.

But in reading the accounts of battles in the Edda or Saga lays, we must remember that there was this difference between the later battles and those with which we are now concerned. It was during the second part of the Viking Age that naval battles became common. When they began they took place between rival members of the Scandinavian race, like a certain naval battle in Ireland which we shall describe hereafter. At the present time, and against the Christians, the Northmen could not fight such battles, simply because the Christians had no navies to oppose to them.

The ships as yet were vessels of transport, not of war. The men came out to fight on land. By the necessities of the case they were foot soldiers. This was no disadvantage to the Viking in England or in Ireland, where the opposing armies were likewise made up almost exclusively of foot soldiers. But on the Continent this arm of the service was all through the ninth century rapidly giving place to the horseman, who was the forerunner of the mediæval knight. This change might and ought to have put the Northmen at a serious disadvantage, had the armies of the Lothairs and of Charles the Bald been more united or better handled. But the Vikings learnt from their enemies; and we read of them anon as so far taking a lesson from the Frank military system, that they began, when they landed, to seize horses from the peasantry in the neighbourhood and to ride over the country on them—a sort of mounted marines, as it were. When, in the latter half of our Viking Age, they had established regular colonies in France, they no doubt soon acquired all the military arts known to the Franks.

They had, we see, bows, spears, swords, and axes. Bows and arrows are very frequently mentioned in the Eddic songs,

vardss. v. 8 (Bugge) ['Helgi and Svava,' *Corp. P. B.* i. 145, l. 33]. The word is, however, probably derived from the Franks. See Ducange *s. v.* brunia.

and we have many accounts of persons of note slain by the Viking arrows in the battles of this century. Swords and spears have furnished the most frequent remains in this kind, and are the most commonly mentioned in literature. The sword especially, though not originally characteristic of the Teutons, we may believe to have been among the Northmen a universal weapon.[1] An armoury full of swords was the best kind of 'capital'; and sometimes one particular sword would be a disputed heirloom for generations.[2] But perhaps the most distinctive and characteristic among Viking weapons (though this applies more especially to the Danes) was the axe. The Danes were as much celebrated for their axes as the Franks had been at an earlier date for theirs. But while the *francisca*, the axe of the Franks, had been a light weapon —of the tomahawk order almost, for it could be thrown as well as used for striking—the axes of the Danes were two-handed weapons of great weight and power, terrible in the hands of a compacted, well-disciplined host.

III.

Albeit the earliest Vikings came as plunderers only, there is no evidence that they came forth merely through a love of adventure or the hope of gain. Tradition always spoke of their exile as not being voluntary but enforced.[3] Dudo's account concerning the ancestors of the Normans, for example, is that they were driven forth through the poverty of their country.

The younger men of the Scandinavian nationalities, he tells us, after they were grown up, often conspired against their fathers and grandfathers for the possession of their property, for the population was excessive, and the land not large enough for their habitation. By an old custom, therefore, a multitude of

[1] See above, p. 151, note [1].

[2] As the sword Tirfing mentioned in the Agantyr lay, Sigurd's sword Gram, &c.

[3] The Scandinavian countries at all times of the world's history have had to send out exiles. That any special overcrowding due to the practice of polygamy was the cause of the Viking emigrations, as Steenstrup thinks, I do not myself believe. (See K. Maurer in *Jenäer Lit. Zeit.* 1877.)

the young men were collected by lot and thrust out of the kingdom, that they might gain by force a kingdom for themselves, and the others live in peace. Thus it was that the Getæ, also called Goths, depopulated nearly the whole of Europe. When they were thus exiled they made a sacrifice to Thor, one of their gods. They raised the standard of war upon their ships. They were sent out poor that they might gain riches elsewhere. They were deprived of their own possessions that they might win kingdoms in foreign lands. The Daci (Danes) driven out in this fashion came to France.[1]

Traditions tell us of the young leader throwing into the air a lance or a feather, and letting its fall or flight determine which way he and his band should turn. It is a fine picture. All the world being alike unknown, it mattered little which way they went—wherever it was it led into a gloomy, giant-guarded region, where only the boldest of men and gods ever penetrated. We must bear in mind that, through all the years during which the Vikings properly so-called were winning their way in Western Europe, other bands of adventurers, whose deeds are wholly lost in oblivion, were winning their way not less successfully in the East: they were founding that Scandinavian kingdom which was called at first Gardarîki, or Greater Suithiod, a territory extending from Ladoga to Kiev, commanding the early trade route by the Dnieper and the Duna, the original Empire of Russia, the germ out of which has sprung the Empire of All the Russias of to-day.[2]

A.D. 862. In 1862 was celebrated the millenary of the foundation of this kingdom at Novgorod by Rorik the Varangian.[3] We must not forget this other field of northern-

[1] Dudo, *De mor. et act. duc. Norm.* i. I have no space here to discuss the question of Dudo's value as a reporter of northern tradition. He has (to speak only of recent publications) been attacked by Mr. Howorth in the *Archæologia* for 1880, and defended by M. Lair in the preface to his edition of Dudo, and by Prof. Steenstrup, *Indledning*, &c.

[2] *Cf.* Spruner, *Handatlas*, No. 67.

[3] Or the Russ; for the very name *Russ* is probably of Scandinavian (or Finno-Scandinavian) origin. It is believed to be a corruption of *Rothmen* ('Sea-farers'), and is therefore almost exactly the equivalent of the name of the western adventurers, *Vikings*.

adventure, in which the achievements of the Scandinavians were almost more important than those in the west, when we picture the young bands of emigrants trusting themselves to the hands of chance as they set forth to conquer new possessions. But these deeds of the Northmen in the east were more utterly without their sacred bard than the Viking expeditions properly so-called, which were made westward. Even if it were not so they could find no place in our present study.

The leader chosen for such an expedition would not be the eldest son of the royal house, but some cadet, very often some member in the position of Hamlet, one who stood too near the throne; for, as every one knows, the succession in Teutonic royal families was not that of strict heredity, but more like the custom which the Irish called *tanistry*, whereby the eldest member of a family succeeded to the kingship; uncles were often preferred to nephews, sometimes the sons of younger sons were preferred to those of the eldest son. Any inconvenient claimant would, no doubt, often be got rid of by placing him at the head of a Viking expedition. Such, according to one tradition, was the case with the greatest legendary Viking leader, Ragnar Lodbrog; such, according to another tradition, was the case with the most famous historical Viking leader, Rolf. But, as Dudo says, they went out poor to come home rich; they lost their possessions at home that they might win kingdoms abroad. They fulfilled the conditions which Teutonic romance postulates for that ideal Teutonic hero, the despised younger son, the Boots of folk tales.

Even before Viking days the legendary hero dear to the popular mind was of the same kind. Beowulf is the youngest brother of Hygelác, his man, one, only the first, among Hygelác's house-thanes. There was some tradition, too, that Beowulf, like the typical hero of the popular romance, had had his years of idleness and contempt at the hands of his brethren. After the death of Hygelác, Hygelác's son—contrary almost to received Teutonic tradition, for he was only a boy—was raised to the throne, and Beowulf became his guardian. So, too, Cassiodorus relates of that renowned Gothic warrior, Gensomir,

that, though the greatest man-at-arms of his nation, he refused the crown, and contented himself with the post of guardian to the young king, his nephew.

In all this there is something of a proud *Entsagung*, which has had, no doubt, its fascination for all people of all times—as it appears, for example, in the state and character of Achilles—but more especially so for the Teutonic character; and which is, I take it, the secret of much of the success of the Teutons in the art of government. They have thereby been able to grasp the substance and dispense with the show of power, as, among the Merovingians, the Mayors of the Palace long did; as the Norman dukes or the dukes of Apulia did when they accepted the lower title; as did the stadholders in Holland; as Napoleon might wisely have done; but this virtue, though it was essentially a Roman one, has rarely been displayed among a modern Latin race.

In the case of many of the legendary heroes of the Teutons, there was not even a blood relationship to the king to induce them to preserve their lower rank; not being by birth inferior, and in prowess far above, the monarch, they yet consent to remain his *man*, as Siegfred [Sifrit] does to Gunther in the Niebelungen legend. And I do not know in any poem a passage more pathetic than that scene where, after his last day's hunting, Siegfred runs down to the stream to quench his thirst, and when arrived there gives place to his lord, and will not drink before Gunther; while all the time Gunther and Hagen are only waiting till he stoops over the water to transfix him with their spears.

Whatever the Vikings and their leaders may have lost in rank and possessions they gained in glory. It was to them, and not to those at home, that the thoughts of their countrymen turned, in their honour that the new crop of lays and sagas sprang up. We have seen two kings of the Danes in Denmark, Siegfred and Godfred, in the days of Charlemagne—the latter a conspicuous figure. Some three or four names of their successors appear in the Chronicles, one of them an important personage. Then the list ceases, and for a period

we do not hear so much as a single authentic name of a ruler in Scandinavian countries. Meanwhile the Viking leaders begin to appear, and at the very time that the chroniclers become silent about the kings in Denmark and Sweden, of Jutland and Leire, of Suithiod and Gauthiod, their pages are filled with the names of the sea-captains from the north.

IV.

Jutland and the isles were Danish. Danish, too, was the extreme southern bulge of the Scandinavian peninsula, the provinces to-day called Halland, Skåne, Bleking, and Småland. Next to these came Gauthiod, West Gothland and East Gothland, and north of Gauthiod, Suithiod, in which stood Sigtuna and its sacred groves. But the Scandinavians on this side of the Scandinavian peninsula did not probably extend further north than the Dal river, a little to the north of Upsala; all the rest was Lapp or Finnish territory. The Norsemen stretched as far as Hördaland—that is to say, the Hardanga Fjord and Sogne Fjord; probably farther north to the Trondhjem Fjord; but these districts were only thinly inhabited. The bulk of the population lay on the northern coast of the Scager Rack and Cattegat, that narrow inlet to the Baltic which in Viking days bore the name of Viken—*the* Vik (Bay) *par excellence*.[1]

But in all these lands only the outer fringes of the country were inhabited; the centre was still possessed by vast virgin forests.[2]

Writers upon the Viking Age love to dwell upon the picture of the hardy mountaineers of Norway, the fishermen in the rocky fjords, gaining from their bitter struggles with nature the training for their Viking life. But the picture needs some correction. Though nature is no doubt hard and sterile

[1] The northern coast was also called Viken or Westfold. There was once a larger district called the Vik (Viken) stretching along the whole of the north coast of the Skager Rack and Cattegat. Later the name was limited to the coast between the Christiania Fjord and the Gotha Elf. This last river was the boundary of Norway in those days.

[2] See Chapter II.

enough over all the Scandinavian lands, yet it remains true that the great body of the Scandinavian people must have been to be found, not in mountainous regions or on storm-vexed coasts, such as those of the Hardanger or the Sögne, but in the low-lying lands near the Baltic. Just so it is with Scotland. To Frenchmen and most Continental writers the Scotchmen are always *montagnards*. Yet it remains true that the history of Scotland is the history of the Lowlands and not of the Highlands. Of Norway even the later history of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the days of Olaf Tryggvesson or Olaf the Saint, is connected far less with the Hardanger and Sögne regions than in the first place with Viken and the Christiania Fjord, and, in the second place, with the scarcely less fertile Trondhjem Fjord, half-way to the North Cape.[1]

Yet there is one feature of this early Scandinavian life which we can better realize to-day in the wilder fjord districts than elsewhere. If you have stayed for a while at, say, Gudvangen on the Sögne, at the end of that awful valley of the Nærödal, on which during many months the sun never shines, at Aardal (Black Dale) right at the extremity of the same fjord, or at any place such as these two, where the walls of rock rise precipitously on every side and exit seems impossible, then you will learn to realize how completely the water may be *the* one path to an extent which in these days of roads and railways is not possible elsewhere. On Sundays or the days of any festival—best of all if it be Midsummer Eve, the day of the sun's festival, a survival from heathen times—when some gathering of neighbours is expected, as you stand looking over the blank water you will see how, as if starting out of the rocks themselves, a multitude of little craft have suddenly emerged to view, till the face of the fjord, so empty a moment before, becomes covered with these boats, some far off and some near, but each making for the same trysting-place. On the still evening the beat of the oars, the singing voices of the young men and girls sound far over the water. They are gathering to pay their half-heathen rites to the sun on his

[1] See for a good example of this *The Saga of Hakon the Good*.

midsummer day, by lighting up the Bale-Fire (Balder's Bale) and by dancing through all the undarkened night.

Very easily at such a time our fancy takes us back to days when it needed not precipitous rocks, only a rough and woody interior and the safe, inviting water of the Baltic, to turn the sea—the 'swan-road' of our early poetry—into a road, and not a barrier, between one place and another. We understand how these lands came to be set apart for the cultivation of the art of boat-building and their children a destined race of explorers; and we are led to ask ourselves how much *we* may owe to the Scandinavian blood which runs in our veins.

V.

The weak point in the armour of the Viking adventurer was that he went forth unaccompanied by the Divine powers. There was, we have said, a quasi-religious sanction given to his treasure-seeking: he retained, and even enlarged upon, one supernatural element in his creed—that special belief in the wise shield-maidens of Odin. But on the whole he carried but little of his ancient creed with him. We must not think of these adventurers (as some writers have represented the Vikings) as a sort of Moslems of the north, with a northern paradise (Valhöll, Walhalla) waiting for all who died slain by the sword. The existence of Valhöll was probably not much more than a pious opinion among the Northmen in the Viking Age; and the place was never represented, like the Moslem's Paradise, as the reward of those who died fighting for their creed.

These Vikings had thus no spiritual power to oppose to Christianity, and when they came in contact with it, it was not long before its mystic influence began to obtain dominion over their own minds, as it had done over the minds of the earlier Teutonic wanderers. But of this when it began. For the majority of the adventurers at the beginning of the Viking Age it were perhaps best to say that they bade adieu to their own supernal powers when they left their native country, but gained no new ones. As they say in America that there is no god

west of the Mississippi, so we may say that for them there was no god beyond the Eyder or the Vik.

The one strong belief which remained to them was the belief in Fate, which, in its own form, shines in their northern romances with as deep and pathetic a glow as in the Greek tragedy. The life of the hero of these sagas ends almost always in the same way. He is sacrificed on the altar of Fate, and of—what shall we say?—of the theory of conduct which the belief in Fate engendered. The hero knows how and where danger lies in wait for him. It is treachery for the most part, the treachery of some near friend or kinsman. But his code of honour prevents him from turning aside to avoid it. It would not, as we should say, be gentlemanly to show suspicion of a host or comrade, and so he falls with his eyes open into the snare. As a man may not avoid his fate, he can at least step down with dignity into the dark pit, wrapping, as it were, his mantle about him as he passes.

Sigurd from the prophecy of Gripir and from the talking eagles, Siegfred from his spae-wife Kriemhild, had foreknowledge of their end.[1] They might have turned back, but they went on all the same. And one after another we see the saga heroes throwing their lives away, as it seems, voluntarily and aimlessly.

There is, no doubt, in these pictures a touch of the whimsicality of a savage's adherence to a traditional code of conduct, though he himself knows not the reason of it. But there is likewise in all the germ of a rude chivalry, which in other days, among the Northmen when they had become Normans, took nobler forms.

Close beside this belief in Fate stood another very curious

[1] Skiljomk heilir! Munat sköpom vinna
Nú hefir þú, Gripir, vel gört sem ek beiddak.
Fliótt mindir þú fríðri segja
Mína ævi, ef þú mättir þat.

Let us part in peace. None can fate withstand.
Now hast thou, Gripir, what I bade thee done.
You would, I ween, have willingly told
My life better, had you been able.

and beautiful notion—that of the man who went about death-doomed. As before a man was death-doomed he might come unexpectedly out of deadly danger, for

Wyrd oft saves an undoomed man,

so the doomed one in moments of seeming security, in casual or domestic intercourse, would suddenly betray himself as *feigr*—as the Scotch still say, 'fey.'[1] Sometimes it was by unusual high spirits that the man who was fey drew on him the notice of his fellows, and that form of the superstition is best retained in the Scottish notion of being 'fey'—something in it of the classic, or say rather universal, idea of Nemesis—that the gods, envious of too much happiness, and seeing any one in such a case, at once resolve upon his overthrow.[2] When King Olaf the Saint lay with his army upon one side of the fatal valley of Stiklestad, with the hostile power of the bonders defiling towards him on the opposite hill, he laid him down for a moment to rest with his head upon the knee of his trusted warrior, Finn Arnesson. Slumber overtook him, and he slept a little while. But as he slept the bonders' army was seen to be advancing in great numbers and with banners raised. Therefore Finn awakened the king. . . . The king said, 'Why did you awake me, Finn, and not allow me to finish my dream? . . . They are not yet so near: would you had let me sleep.'

[1] Allt es feigs forað (Fáfnismál). 'The doomed man's death is every where.' 'Every place is an abyss for the doomed man.'

Or again:—

Kveld lifir mað ekki, eptir kvið Norna (Hamðismál).
No man can live past the eve after the Fates have spoken.

Every one will remember the powerful scene in *Guy Mannering*, 'The gauger is fey.' A still more beautiful and pathetic rendering of the same idea is Shakespeare's in *Romeo and Juliet*:—

My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,
And all day long an unaccustomed gladness
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.

[2] Herodotus' story of Polycrates is of course a typical example of this belief.

'What was the dream, sire?' Finn said, 'whose loss appears to you so great?'

And the king told his dream—that he seemed to see a high ladder, and on this he ascended so high up in the air that heaven was open; for the ladder reached to it. 'And when thou awokest me I was come to the topmost step.'

Then Finn replied, 'The dream seems not so good to me as it does to thee. I think thou art "fey," king.'

VI.

Such, then, were the equipments, material and moral, of the Baltic peoples, who to our fancy stand at this moment trimming the wings of their dragon ships, scarcely yet beyond the verge of their new life. The one thing of all others which it is hardest for us to realize is, that the life *was* so new, the world so unknown to the greatest number. We, in our mental pictures of the Europe of those days, cannot but see some parts of it as if visibly bathed in light; those are the parts in which authentic history has begun. Other parts, of which we have no authentic records, are as visibly cast in shadow. But from the Northman's point of view we must reverse the picture. He had some knowledge (vague, no doubt) of the Baltic lands—first those of his own kinsfolk, next those of the Slavonic peoples, his Vendland—his Vanaland, perhaps—of Obotriti, of Wiltzi, who are no more than names to us, of others who are not even named in authentic history. Something of these and of their ways he knew; not much, but more than we shall ever know.

Beyond this circle all was strange for the vast majority of the Viking wanderers, not less strange than in the old Northern mythology was all the land beyond the Midgard Sea. Some one or two wanderers had fared south, may even have abandoned their creed and become Christians, like the half-mythical Holger (Otkar[1]), the Dane who, about A.D. 760, came to Francia and settled there. But as these wanderers would not return, the stay-at-home Northmen were none the wiser.

[1] In Mon. Sangall, the best historical authority for his existence; Oger in the *Chansons de Geste*.

We have a remarkable example to show how real was this feeling of strangeness; how real, too, that giant world of the Teutonic mythology whereof we spoke a chapter or two ago, difficult though it is for us to realize this. One name for that giant-world, or Jötunheim, among the Northmen was Bjarmaland (Biarmia), a name which was no doubt appropriated from Perm, south of the White Sea, as mythical places, Olympuses, Tempes, Nysian Plains, generally do get identified with actual localities. There is, however, no doubt that Biarmia was, in many Northern myths, scarcely distinguishable from Hel, the home of the dead. It was like Helheim, both under the world and at its extreme limit. In Saxo Grammaticus' story of the Voyage of King Gorm the Old and his comrade Thorkill, we come to this Bjarmaland, and to a town in it which, says Saxo, 'looked like a vaporous cloud.' (This is the Grammarian's translation of Niflhel, a portion of Hel.) Two dogs exceeding fierce guarded the entrance of the king's palace. Within the gates were horrible black spectres; and the travellers were well-nigh choked by the putrid stench which filled the air. Clearly no human dwelling-place. Thorkill made another journey or another descent to this out-world region; and on this occasion he found the old Giant Loki, whom the gods had chained till Doomsday. As a remembrance of his journey Thorkill plucked three hairs of the giant's beard, and brought them back to the upper earth. But they made so dreadful a smell that it caused a plague, and many died therefrom.

Now there is a legend of Viking days with almost the same 'plot.' In it the typical Viking hero, Ragnar Lodbrog, goes upon an expedition. He, too, assaults a strange town and carries thence a prize. But after the assault an uncanny mist surrounds the northern troops; they are so enveloped that they can scarcely find their way back to their ships; many are killed before they can do so. Nor does the vengeance of the infernal powers and of the lord of this vaporous city end here. Ragnar Lodbrog carries back his prize with him, and his troops their booty; but they carry back also the infection of a plague, or of a sort of dysentery or cholera which kills many of them,

which spreads among the Danes after they have returned to their native Denmark. What is this city which in Viking tradition corresponds to Niflheim, the lower world?

By chance we have an account of the same expedition preserved by Christian chroniclers. They, too, record that the leader of the Vikings was called Ragnar. They, too, tell us of the mist which enveloped the plunderers (which had, no doubt, nothing of the supernatural about it), and of the sickness which they carried home with them; this sickness, say the Christian writers, was only stayed after the release of all the Christian prisoners, and after the restoration by Ragnar of the plunder which he had taken from their churches. But the chroniclers add to all this the name of the spot where these wonders took place; and the place is—Paris, no other; Paris, the favourite city of Julian, Paris, where Pippin lay buried, which, though not precisely a royal city, was from its position even then one of the most important centres of trade and one of the richest towns in France.[1] A volume could not better express than this one fact the feelings with which the wanderers set forth upon their new life. Such feelings are best rendered by the lines of the Eddaic poem, from which we have already quoted, describing how Skirnir, the messenger of Frey, set forth on a journey into Jötunheim. Words like those which Skirnir addressed to his horse, the Viking leader might have addressed to his ship:—

Dark it grows without,
Time it is to fare
Over the misty ways.[2]
We will both return
Or that all-powerful Jotun[3]
Shall seize us both.[4]

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[1] See Chapter IX. [2] Orig. 'fells.'
[3] The Jotun in this case is really Death. [4] *Skirnisför.*

CHAPTER VI.

THE VIKINGS IN IRELAND.

I.

NOTHING of the character of those new-comers, as we have sketched it in the preceding chapter, nothing of their history or their birthplace was known to the Christian chroniclers of the time. How could it be? By an exception which is extraordinary those 'first three Viking ships' which came to the shore of England are in our *Chronicle* reported to have come from Hærethaland. But where that Hærethaland lay, whether it was, as has generally been assumed, Hördaland, or the Hardanger region of Norway, whether finally the name Hærethaland may not have arisen from a copyist's mistake are matters for question.[1]

After this date the chroniclers in the different Christian countries know little of the home of the pirates. The Vikings are to them heathens, Gentiles, foreigners (*Gaill*, Ir.),[2] lakemen (*Lochlann*—an expression only used in Ireland), Northmen (*Normanni*, a word which we must translate Scandinavians not Norsemen [3]) and Danes. This last word again, in the mouth of a Frisian or a Saxon chronicler, might very well be a general name for any Scandinavians.

From this necessary ignorance on the part of the con-

[1] See above, p. 126 and note 3.

[2] In the *Four Masters* the Vikings are at first pirates (sea-robbers), afterwards heathen (Gentiles), or foreigners (Gaill).

[3] Not necessarily Norsemen, I mean.

temporary chroniclers of all which could give distinctness and the element of personality to the history of the early raids, and from the fact that through all this period the native literature of Scandinavia is yet unborn, there results a sad uniformity and dulness in the earlier pages of Viking history. There is no help for this. We must, on the path of history as on all other paths, make up our minds to much monotonous travelling. We cannot be concerned with ideas and pictures only; we must follow the course of events even when those events are recorded only in the driest outline. It is in view of much that must, I know, prove stony and dull in this history (the present chapter perhaps the stoniest and most dull of all), that I have placed after the title-page those lines of Michael Angelo, which I have myself often found a sort of talisman upon the drier roads of history and of life:—

> The best of artists hath no thought to show
> Which the rough stone in its superfluous shell
> Doth not include: to break the marble spell
> Is all the hand which serves the brain can do.[1]

Its application to the present case is that even the dreariest chronicles contain within them—they cover up and conceal, but still hold—the records of a mighty activity, a quenchless life, which the highest art of the historian could never revivify in half its natural fire and beauty. That incomparable power—whether you call it human or Divine—which moulds human history into shape, greater than any power of any artist, is not only always at work, but can be always seen at work, though dimly seen sometimes through the meagreness of our records. It would be an impertinence to spend words in painting the immensity of the creation which is hidden behind the superfluous shell of our present history. For that is nothing less than the Europe of the Middle Ages; the Europe which brought to birth the mediæval cathedral, and all that that implies; that created the Latin hymn, the vast and tenebrous mythology and belief attaching to the future state, the Vision

[1] Mr. Symond's translation.

of Dante; who can record how much else of good and of evil it has created? These are some of the things which lie beyond the end of our journey, and which though we shall never reach (in this present history), we can see them always before us and recognize the signs of our approach.

Another birth of Time lying in the same way beyond the compass of the present volume, but only just beyond it, is the Old Norse literature; a creation far smaller, doubtless, than that of mediæval Europe or the Gothic Cathedral, but far greater than most readers are inclined to suppose. A thing unique, too, belonging to its own age, and to none other in the history of the world, which has had its birth and growth and decline, and has then died away, leaving, we might fairly say, no successor. This is an outcome of the contact between Christendom and the Vikings. We cannot, I think, refuse to accept the theory which assigns the birthplace of the Northern literature to some part of the extreme west of Europe, to one or other of the kingdoms which the Vikings conquered from the Celts in Scotland and Ireland—in the Orkneys or the Shetlands, in Caithness, in the Hebrides, in Man, or round the Irish coast.[1] These different kingdoms came in the course of time to be so closely allied, that it makes little difference which of them we choose for the cradle of the Edda and Saga literature. In these regions the contact between the Vikings and the Christians was wholly different from what it was in Central Europe; the Christianity itself of these countries was of a peculiar character. But such as they were the effects of that contact were very marked. Should our inquiries ever advance into the ensuing century we should obtain a clearer idea of what were these effects. At present this, too, stands hidden in the future, as the image within the stone.

II.

Something has been said, and more might easily have been said, of the learned and spiritual life of Ireland in these and

[1] *Cf.* Vigfusson in *Sturlunga Saga*, Preface, and *Corp. P. B.* Introd. *Cf.* also Todd, *War*, &c., p. xxviii.

earlier days. But let not the reader inquire after the contemporary political life. Scarcely anything can be told of it except empty dynastic lists, or bald records of continual civil wars. Irish historians contend (some of them do at least) that about the time of St. Columba the country really was showing signs of coalescing into one kingdom, and of making a new beginning in policy. It is a pious opinion which one would not wish to disturb. All acknowledge that between that day and the days to which we have now come, when the invasions of the Northmen brought 'unnumbered woes' upon the people of Erin, that progress had not been continuous. And now the power of the Ard-Ri, the so-called Over-King of Ireland, was little more than nominal over his brother kings of the larger districts. The number of persons who bore the name of king was almost uncountable. 'No dun (fort) without its king.' It is a maxim of Irish law. Each of these kinglets, again, was no doubt bound, though by a loose tie of service, to some one or other of the kings of the greater divisions. Only one principle, the family or clan feeling, was kept alive in this embryo nationality. And where all else seems to fluctuate, we have the extraordinary phenomenon of one great clan, the Hy-Njall (O'Neil), having already remained the dominant race in Ireland for four hundred years, and furnishing from among the heads of one or another division of the clan all the chief kings of Ireland during this period. These O'Neils all claimed descent from a certain Njall of the nine hostages, whose date is given A.D. 396–406.

We may look upon Ireland as divided first of all into two great sections, a northern and a southern; the dividing line running somewhere about the latitude of the Slieve-Bloom mountains. In the Northern half reigned the different kings of the O'Neil family. And their chief rivals at this period were the king or kings of Munster, the southern half of Ireland, which formed sometimes a single kingdom, sometimes was divided into two. The most southern of the two branches of the O'Neils reigned in Meath, a kingdom which in those days included a great part of Leinster. In Ulster, amid the oak forests

of Derry, reigned the great family of the northern O'Neils, whose king, Njall-Caille, beside the kingdom of Ulster, enjoyed from A.D. 833–845 in addition the title of Over-King of Erin. Out of Ulster was cut the kingdom of Irish Dalriada; and out of Meath was taken the small kingdom of Bregia (Bray). Bregia, situated as it was on the east coast, was an important district in the history of the Vikings in Ireland, a likely object for their attacks. It came in the end to receive more of their inroads than any other of the Irish kingdoms; and probably contained, after their final settlement, a larger infusion of Norse blood than any other part of Ireland (though that was not great[1]).

The Over-King of Ireland was still called King of Tara; though at this moment his throne was at Derry—not even in the kingdom of Meath, where Tara stood, and though Tara never more contained the palace of the Ard-Ri. 'Tara's halls,' it is to be feared, had long grown silent. And this was no small matter. Not because there was any particular magic about the name of one capital rather than that of another, but because in ancient days the greatest *market* in all Ireland had been held at this place, the one great national assembly which the people enjoyed. To have the command of the market was, as it were, to have the command of the purse-strings; for the king who dominated Tara with his army might exact such tolls and dues as he pleased. In those days, too, the great annual or triennial fairs held at Tara, or wherever they might be, constituted the very life of the nation. At them took place not only a buying and selling, but assemblies of notabilities, passing of laws—or interpretations of laws—and so forth. So that historians are right in dating, in a great degree, the decline of the power of the Irish over-kings from the decay of Tara and the silencing of its harps.

Up to the year 807 the Vikings had not touched upon the mainland of Ireland. Indeed, so far as the records tell us, each attempt of theirs to establish themselves upon the mainland of any country had, up till that year, A.D. 807.

[1] *Cf.* Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, p. 100 *sqq.*

proved unsuccessful. They had succeeded on the Island of Lindisfarne; they had failed upon the Northumbrian coast at Wearmouth. They had been beaten in Glamorganshire, but they had succeeded in Rechain, in Man, in Iona, and in Innishmurray. Now, however, they broke the spell. Shortly after their attack on the last place, they landed in Sligo and harried the country far and wide.[1] And after that, fleet seemed to follow fleet in quick succession; so that we soon hear of the Vikings plundering and exploring all down the western coast of Ireland; now carrying on their depredations with little hindrance, now encountered and defeated by the inhabitants: slaughtered by Ulstermen in 811; marauding down the west coast in 812; in Mayo, in Connaught, and down as far as Cork harbour; and once again in the more southern parts near Killarney.[2]

In 812 they met with rather a decisive defeat at the hands of the Eoghanachts of Loch Lein (Killarney), which was noised abroad in Northern Europe, and joyfully recorded by Einhard over at the Court of Charles the Great.[3] Howbeit next year the marauders were successful in another engagement with the men of Owless.[4]

A.D. 812–13.

Then came a pause of seven years; and it may have been about this time that a change took place in the nationality of the Vikings who came to Ireland.

Before the Viking history has advanced far we begin to detect two series of northern piracies, taking two different routes. One route was a coast voyage: down the west coast of Denmark to Frisia; from Frisia to Francia—Neustria, that is to say—or to the opposite side of the English Channel, to our

[1] *F. M.* 802 (Ed. O'Donovan, i. 413); *Annals of Ulster* 806 (O'Conor, *Scrip. Rev. Hib.* iv. 196; Hennessy (Irish Rolls Series), vol. i. 293).

[2] *Ann. Ult. s.a.* 810; *ibid.* 811; *F. M.* 807.

[3] *Ann. Ult.* 811; *F. M.* 807; *Gaedhil and Gaill*, c. iv.; Einhard, *Ann.* 812; *Ann. Fuld.* 812.

[4] *F. M.* 808; *Ann. Ult.* 812. It will be seen that the Irish chronicles are very uncertain as to date. The *Annals of Ulster* are generally the most trustworthy, and especially so for Viking raids in the north of Ireland.

own coasts; through the English Channel to the mouths of the great rivers of Francia, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne; later still, to the west coast of Spain, and through the Straits of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean. Or, supposing the pirates to have made their way to England, they might sail north to East Anglia or Northumbria, or south by west round the coast of Kent to Sussex, to Wessex, possibly up through St. George's Channel to Wales, to Ireland, to Man, to Iona. All these different expeditions might diverge from one original route.

But there was another route which went straight across the North Sea, from the Norway coast we may suppose, to the north of Scotland, to the Shetlands and Orkneys, down to the Scottish coast, then round by Western Scotland, by the Hebrides, by Iona, to Ireland, where it would meet with the other current, supposing any stream thereof to be flowing at the time. Or, again, this current of invasion might flow northward from the Shetlands to the Faroes, beyond the Faroes as far as Iceland. An Irish monk, writing in A.D. 825,[1] says that even at that day many colonies of Irish monks in the islands of the North Atlantic had been uprooted and destroyed by the pirates from the north; so by A.D. 825 we may be sure that both routes were in full use.

But not, I suspect, much earlier. It is natural to suppose that the coasting voyage was the earliest made, and that it continued to the last to be the most frequented. I am myself disposed to attribute all the earliest Viking raids to adventurers who had come this way; and I will guess that the first attacks upon Ireland, which came from the far north, are those which we are about to record.[2] These renewed attacks begin in A.D. 820, about the time, as we have just seen, that other Viking fleets were plundering and slaughtering in the Shetlands and Faroes. The Vikings who came by the coasting route would naturally be chiefly Danes, and we may be almost sure that

[1] Decuil, *De Mensura Orbis Terrarum.*

[2] Thus the fleet which attacked Ireland in 812 is called in *Ann. Fuldens.* 'Classis Danorum.' Much the same is the view maintained by Steenstrup in his *Normannerne.*

Danes were in the majority in the fleets which sailed to England and to Continental Europe. In Ireland, upon the contrary, the Norsemen had, for some time after A.D. 820, the field to themselves, and the traces of Norse language in Ireland and Scotland are much more numerous than the traces of Danish.[1]

The Irish at the beginning designated their new invaders by the name of foreigners (Gaill) simply. In time they began to distinguish the Gaill into two sections or two nationalities—the Finn-Gaill, or white strangers, and the Dubh-Gaill, or black strangers. What the foundation for this distinction was we cannot tell; for there is really no racial difference of type between the Norsemen and the Danes. It is, however, certain that by the names Finn-Gaill and Dubh-Gaill the Irish meant to separate these two Scandinavian peoples.

A.D. 820. The attacks, then, began once more in 820. In this year and the next Viking fleets appeared upon all sides of Ireland. They plundered in Cork harbour and in Beggary Island, off the Wexford coast; and thence they sailed

A.D. 822. to Howth, near Dublin;[2] a place we note which, like Lambey, has got its name from the Northmen —hoved, a head. They did not disdain to fall upon the barren Skellig Michil, which stood off the coast of Kerry,

A.D. 824. fronting the Atlantic waves, and to carry off its one inhabitant, a solitary hermit (Etgall), who died in their hands[3]; no more than they shrank from attacking one of the most famous religious communities of North Ireland, Bangor (Bennchair), on the coast of Down.[4]

A.D. 825 (?) At first, of course, their attacks were chiefly upon places on or near the coast. But it was not long before they ventured far inland. We can see them land-

[1] See Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*.

[2] Plunder of Edar (Howth) by the Gaill, who carried off a great booty of women, Four Masters, 819 (O'Donovan i. 430). Cf. *Gaill*, v.; *Ann. Ult.* 820. The year is that of Coenwulf of Mercia's death, A.D. 822? *Cf.* Theopold, *Krit. Unters.* p. 24.

[3] *Ann. Ult.* 823 (824? Steenstrup, 823).

[4] *F. M.* 822 (O'Donovan i. 434). *Ann. Ult.* 822 and 823. *Chron. Scot.* (Hennessy), p. 132. *Gaill*, vi.

ing in Wexford Bay, and marching thence west to Taghmon, which now lies on the high road from Wexford to New Ross; from Taghmon (probably through Old Ross) to St. Mullin's, which lies upon the river Barrow. Then northward by boat to Leighlin Bridge and into the Ossory country from there; or else straight across country to Inistioge, upon the river Nore. At Inistiogue this band was met by a hosting of Ossory men and defeated, or at least checked in its advance.[1] So back they made their way as best they could to Waterford, embarked there and sailed far round the coast until they came to Youghall harbour and the mouth of the Blackwater. Well screened by the leafy banks of this river they made up-stream westwards to Lismore. There was a monastery there. This and the church of St. Molaise (now Kilmolash), five miles off, they plundered. Then to their boats again and back to sea, and round to Kinsale Bay, from whence they fell upon Dunderrow and Inishannon, two other rich foundations not far from the coast. Finally we hear of their fleet at Kilpeacon, in the Limerick county. In this raid, the chronicle says, the heathen men utterly demolished Lismore, Dunderrow, Inishannon, and Disert Tipraite—a place not identified.[2] Let this one specimen of a Viking raid suffice. But they were as active in the north as in the south; only we notice with some satisfaction (if only as a change) that once the Ulstermen gained a rather important victory over the Vikings. We have no details. It is only 'a victory of the Ulstermen over the Gaill at Lecale, in which very many men fell.'[3]

We must take note that in the same year a Viking fleet fell once more upon Iona. The island, we see, had got back its community of monks, since the terrible attack eighteen years before. And among the brothers was one Blathmac,[4]

[1] Exactly what happened is by no means certain. *Ann. Ult.* 824, *F. M.* (823) and *Chron. Scot. l.c.* speak of a defeat of the Ossorymen, which may or may not be identical with the battle fought during the raid of A.D. 825 (See *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, vii.).

[2] *Gaill*, vii. [3] *F. M.* 823; *Ann. Ult.* 824.

[4] *Ult.* 824, 'Blaimhicc mac Flainn'; *F. M.* 823; *Chron. Sc. l.c.*; Skene, *Celt. Scot.* A.D. 825; Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, ii. 35, A.D. 824.

who had joined them in the special hope of finding martyrdom at the hands of the Northmen; a hope which was now realized. While his comrades sought to hide themselves, he went forward to meet the invaders, and was cut down by Viking swords; and his memory was kept green (for a little while) by a poet and monk of those days, Walafrid Strabo by name, away in Reichenau, upon the shores of Lake Constance.[1]

The chief fury of the Viking attack seems at this time to have fallen upon the south, upon the Bandon and Blackwater, upon Cork harbour, and the mouth of the Shannon, and generally upon the kingdom of Munster. They plundered the greater part of the churches of Erin, says a chronicler, who writes principally of the southern kingdom.[2]

In raids too many to recount, in varied successes and failures of the invaders, the years passed on,[3] till 831–832, when the Vikings took a new departure, and under the guidance of a man of genius, the ambition of the Northerners aimed at higher achievements, at something like a definite conquest of Ireland—or a part of it. The chronicles tell us that in 831, or 832,[4] a 'great royal fleet' came to the north of Ireland. Its flagship bore the ensign of a certain Turgesius or Thorgisl.

A.D. 831–2.

By this time the Finn Gaill had, we may believe, well-estab-

[1] Migne T. 114, col. 1043–6.

[2] *Gaill*, vii. (see Introd. xxxvi.); *cf. F. M.* 820 and 822; *Ult.* 824; *Ch. Scot.* 825.

[3] 'The destruction of Dun-Laighin' [the fort of the Leinster men], in which Conal, King of Fortrenn, was slain' (*An. Ult.* 826). 'Battle at Kilmore' (*Id.*). 'Fearful battle fought by Lethlobar, King of Dalriada, against the Gentiles' (*A. U.* 827; *cf. F. M.* 826). 'Battle gained over the foreigners by Cairbre, lord of Ui-Ceinnsealaigh' (*F. M.* 826). 'Plundering in Louth and capture of Maelbrighde, king of the country' (*A. U.* 830; *F. M.* 829).

[4] I have given an earlier date to the coming of Turgesius' 'great royal fleet' than is given by Munch, Todd, or Steenstrup. Todd gives A.D. 839; (but 830? Introd.); Steenstrup, A.D. 836; Munch, A.D. 838. As *Gaill* distinctly says that Armagh was plundered thrice in one month by Turgesius's Vikings, and as the *F. M.* place the plundering of Armagh thrice in one month in the year 830 and *Ult.*, in 831, there seems every reason to take ours as the date of the advent of Thorgisl. We must note, too, the great increase in the Viking plunderings reported in *An. Ult.* and the *F. M.* from A.D. 831 onwards. Storm, I gather, would agree to the date I have given (*Bidrag*, &c., p. 24).

lished themselves in the Shetlands and Orkneys, and down the western coast of Scotland. We have no record of their deeds in these places; only we know that, as they passed, they blasted the little communities or solitary hermitages of monks, among the islands and down the coast. And that when history gets sight of these regions again, the hundreds of religious settlements have disappeared; and in their place the Norsemen have established forts and treasuries, whither to bring their booty and to refit their wrecked barques.

This great expedition which Thorgisl led into North Ireland we may be pretty sure steered down from the Scottish islands. The fleet made its way (up the Bann?[1]) to Lough Neagh, and in this lough the Vikings gained a signal victory over the Irish—in their poor coracles, most likely. Then they plundered the neighbouring country, and finally fell upon the greatest religious establishment of all Ireland, Ard-Macha, or Armagh. Armagh might call itself then, what it still is, the Primacy of all Ireland. Here dwelt the chief *Comarb* (or heir) of St. Patrick, the first priest of his family or clan, his spiritual successor and his heir in the flesh also. This first plundering of Armagh by the 'Gentiles' took place in 832. But it was not long the only one; for the place was ravaged thrice in one month, and finally the ill-starred 'chief heir of St. Patrick' (Forannan his name) had to flee away, he and his relics, out of his native land altogether, and migrate to the south-west—the Munster district. There, after wandering for some time forlornly enough, he was picked up by another body of Vikings who happened to be plundering in those parts.[2] One may in these determined attacks upon Armagh suspect Thorgisl and his followers of some more definite hostility to the native Church than was implied by mere raids upon rich shrines—we may suspect this in the light of some of Thorgisl's subsequent proceedings.

Meantime other expeditions made their way into Ireland by the east and joined forces with the army of Thorgisl. A fleet came to Louth, plundered in Louth and Meath (at Duleek). A

[1] Steenstrup, *o. c.* ii. 107.

[2] *An. Ult.* 844.

victory was gained over the Northern Vikings in Derry in 833.[1] But this did not effectually hinder their advance nor the consolidation of the Viking forces. We have a long catalogue of the descents and plunderings all round the Irish coasts in those years 833–4, in fact on to 840—ravaging of the monasteries of Louth, the burning (for the first time) of Clonmicnois,[2] that great literary monastery in Central Ireland. The expeditions, we see, had begun to spread far inland, and the monasteries in the lakes to share the fate of those upon the sea-coast. We read of the ravaging of Ferns and Clonmore in 835. This last was on Christmas night;[3] the Vikings having now taken a firm footing in the island, cease to be only summer visitors: a plundering and burning of Mount Garret and Drom-h Ing (Dromin?); and in the next year plunderings in Kildare and the 'first plundering of East Bregia' (Bray[4]) In 836 or 837 came two fleets, each of sixty sail, one up the Boyne, the other up the Liffey.[5] At first the men of Bray were victorious; but their successes did not count for much, and in 837 or 838 we read of an event which is worth remembering: the first taking of Ath-Cliath by the Gentiles—Ath-Cliath being the forerunner of the Dublin of our days.[6]

A.D. 834.

A.D. 835–6.

A.D. 838.

[1] *An. Ult. F. M.* 832. [First year of Njaill Caille, *i.e.*, 833.]

[2] *An. Ult.* 833 and 834. The place is called indifferently Cluainmic-Nois and Cluain-mac-Nois, Clonmicnois or Clonmacnois. Cluain-*muc*-Nois, *Chr. Sc.*

[3] *An. Ult.* 834; *F. M.* 835.

[4] *Ult.* 835, probably by the Liffey fleet of sixty sail.

[5] *Ult.* 835, *F. M.* 835. Here is a sort of summary of the plunderings by various bodies of the Gaill more or less under the direction of Thorgisl 835–840:—

Thorgisl came to Armagh, brought his fleet to Lough Ree, and ravaged both Meath and Connaught.

Plundering of Clonmicnois (near Lough Ree).

,, Clonfert (Galway).

,, Lethra (Tipperary).

,, Terriglas (Tipperary).

,, Innis Celtra (Inniscattery, at the mouth of the Shannon), with its seven churches.

And all the churches of Lough Derg. Comp. *Gaill*, xi.; *An. Ult.* 836. Lough Erne, *F. M.* and *An. Ult.* 836.

[6] *F. M.* 837; *G.* xii.

The town and seaport of Dublin, like Limerick, like Waterford and Wexford, and like many other of the seaport towns of Ireland, was a city of Viking foundation. The *Dubh-Linn* ('Black-pool'=English Blackpool, or *Liver*pool if you like) was a particular spot in the Liffey, close to 'the ford of hurdles,' for that is the meaning of Ath-Cliath. A fort had been built to protect the ford, and in the hands of the Vikings, the fort expanded to become the great port and capital of Ireland. Henceforth Dublin was often taken and retaken by the Northmen and the Irish, but it remained in the end the most important of the Norse settlements in Ireland. It, with Limerick and Waterford, eventually constituted the three Norse kingdoms in Ireland.

We have in connection with these raids in the east of Ireland the name of another Viking leader beside Thorgisl (or Turgesius), Saxulf, namely, who probably commanded one of the fleets just spoken of, and who, after ravaging for a while in the Kildare and Meath districts, was slain by the Irish.[1] No doubt the chief stress of these attacks was felt in the north and in the east of Ireland. But there were plenty more in the west and south, and inland among the monasteries which stood on islands of the inland loughs. There were ravagings in Connaught,[2] and again south in Limerick—a long succession of raids, in one of which the unhappy Forannan, Archbishop of Armagh, was captured and his shrine destroyed.[3] These different accounts are difficult to sift; and we cannot always distinguish the Viking ravages from those which were inflicted by one Irish king upon another. For, alas! the internal strifes were in no degree allayed by these outward dangers to the state.

We hear of some victories of the Irish—a victory of the Tir Connell at Asseroe,[4] of the Dal Cais, on Lough Derg, of the Southern O'Neill in Ardhaccan in Meath.[5] Possibly this

[1] *An. Ult.* 836. [2] *F. M.* 836. [3] *An. Ult.* 834, 844.
[4] *Gaill*, xxi. (misdated?); *F. M.* 836.
[5] *Gaill*, xxi. [838 Todd]; *Ult.* 836 speaks also of a victory over the northern O'Neil.

was the same battle in which Saxwulf was slain. But these victories were profitless. The Vikings continued to advance and to make firmer their foothold in the northern division of Ireland.

A.D. 843 or 844. As the upshot of all these attacks, we find Thorgisl and his followers actually taking possession of all the northern half of Ireland, Lethcuinn, just as, in after years, Halfdan and Guthorm and their Danes possessed themselves of the northern and eastern parts of England. When he had settled himself in Lethcuinn, Thorgisl, who had already done away with Armagh,[1] now finally turned the monks out of Clonmicnois and set up his wife Ota there as a kind of Vala or Priestess. At any rate the chroniclers give us a picture of Ota seated on the high Altar of Clonmicnois and 'giving her answers' from it (843)[2]—a *single* picture gleaming out of the darkness which surrounds the Viking settlements in Ireland, and one which may signify much for us.[3]

This was a memorable event, the establishment of something very like a Norse kingdom over one half of Ireland. By it Thorgisl anticipated by half a century the course of Viking conquest in other countries. Everywhere the history of these raids is much the same. It begins with isolated attacks, as a support to which some island near the coast is seized, which becomes a refuge and an arsenal and treasury for the invaders. Anon they venture further and further inland. They had been like the swallows, only summer visitants; soon we find them at all times of the year. In the case of Ireland, for instance, we can for the first time detect the Northmen wintering in the country in 835. But it is probable that when once Thorgisl's great expedition had landed it did not again return. We first hear of the Vikings wintering in France in 843 and in England

[1] There are many more plunderings in Lough Neagh mentioned in the years 839–841. *An. Ult.* has the entry, 'The Lochlanns (*i.e.*, Norsemen) came into Ireland for the first time *secundum chronicon*' (a. 839), and if we accept this, we must suppose that the first Norsemen were of Thorgisl's fleet, and that he now first came into Ireland.

[2] *Gaedh. and Gaill*, p. xlix. 9, 224–27.

[3] See ch. II.

in the year 851. The next stage is when the Vikings think not only of settling in the country and living on their plunder, but of conquering and colonizing some large part of it. And it is here that Thorgisl's Vikings so far outstripped those in other countries. The taking of Con's half of Ireland fell in 843 or 844. In 878, by the Peace of Wedmore, the English Danes were for the first time settled in like fashion in the Danelag.[1] The settlement of the Danes of Rolf in France and the final establishment of a Norman state there did not take place till the ensuing century in 912.

Lethcuinn, or Con's half, where Thorgisl had seated himself, was the home of the most warlike and powerful of all the Irish clans, the Hy-Njall, or O'Neil. What, we may ask, were the Irish kings and chieftains doing to allow the Norsemen to gain such a footing in Ireland? And we must sorrowfully answer that they were fighting among themselves. In the first place, during nearly all the time of Thorgisl's reign (so to call it) there was a smouldering or active hostility between the King of Munster and the over-king of Ireland. The latter was Njall Caille of the northern Hy-Njall. The King of Munster, Felim[2]—the two Munsters seem to have been united just then under one sceptre—was an ecclesiastical dignitary as well as a political. He was Archbishop of Cashel; and it was the object of his policy to place Cashel on a par with Armagh, South Ireland equal in every respect with North Ireland. Before Thorgisl began his attacks upon Armagh the King of Munster had begun his. The objects of the Vikings coincided with Feidhlimidh's objects; and we have here the example, which was to be so common in after-times, of co-operation between the Gaill and the Gaedhill—the stranger and the native—for the oppression of another Irish tribe or kingdom.

[1] Or we may perhaps call the year 875 the year of the Danish settlement in England.

[2] Feidhlimidh (*say* Felim) was his *im*memorable, apparently unpronounceable, name. It is not quite certain whether Thorgisl or he were the plunderers of Armagh on different occasions.

III.

The ambition of these Vikings was not confined to Ireland, but stretched to the neighbouring island of Britain. More than a generation had passed since the great raids on Lindisfarne and Yarrow, and the country had had leisure to forget its troubles. The supremacy among the heptarchic kingdoms had finally passed from Mercia to Wessex. Offa was reigning when the first pirate ships struck the English coast; now Egberht sat upon the throne of Wessex, and all South-Humbria had become tributary to his kingdom. Being a far-sighted ruler, Egberht did not remain indifferent to the danger near at hand, though he had himself had no experience of the terrors of the Vikings. We find him in 833 calling together a council (a *Witenagemót*) to consult for the defences of the kingdom. His measures were not taken too soon; for two years later a Viking fleet—which we have every reason to believe came from Ireland—fell upon the coast of Kent. It came to Sheppey, and, after old Viking fashion, entrenched itself upon the island.[1] One year later, again, a fleet of five-and-thirty sail fought against the English at Charmouth in Dorset and gained a victory.[2] Anon the Vikings politicly allied themselves with the West Welsh, or Cornishmen, always ready for an attack upon the English. Their united army was met by Egberht at Hengston and crushed.[3] Nor was this king for the remaining years of his life further troubled by the pirate attacks. Still the storm had begun once more to blow upon England and did not again die down. It was forty-five years since the attack upon Lindisfarne; it would be forty years more of steadily increasing Viking raids before something like rest was brought to this land by the Peace of Wedmore.

A.D. 833.

A.D. 835 or 836.

A.D. 836.

A.D. 838.

[1] *A. S. Chron. a.* 833, and *cf. Numism. Chr.*, 1882, p. 61, *sqq.*
[2] Ibid. 833 (4).
[3] Ibid. 835.

And now it seems some change for the better took place in the internal politics of Ireland. It was still the reign of Njall Caille on whom the King of Munster and the Norsemen had pressed so hard. But now Njall had recovered something of his power. We read of a great victory gained by him at Ith over the Vikings (845).[1] And at the same time there arose among the southern O'Neils, the O'Neils of Meath, a famous champion of the name of Malachy (Maelsechlain).[2] He is Malachy I.—not the Malachy of the collar of gold in Moore's song, who reigned as Malachy III. a century and a half later; but he was not less celebrated in his day. He and a certain vassal of his, Tighernach, 'lord' of Loch Gabhar in Meath, may be counted the chief champions of the Irish at this time. And next to these two, Cearbhall, King of Ossory; as on the other hand Felim, King of Munster, was the chief ally of the Norsemen. In 845 Malachy by some means—by victory or treachery—got hold of the person of Thorgisl himself, and the great Norse king was drowned in Loch Owel (in Meath).[3] And with the death of its founder the kingdom of Lethcuinn crumbled away. For awhile all went against the Norsemen. Malachy (who had now become Ard-Ri, and so Malachy I.) gained a *naval* victory over the Vikings; so that we guess he had been constructing a fleet after their pattern, and anticipating the policy of Ælfred the Great in England. Cearbhall, King of Ossory, gained an important victory in 847,[4] and slew 1,200 of the Dublin Vikings. There were victories in Ulster at the same time; and finally Malachy and Tighernach in concert attacked and took the Norsemen's stronghold at Dublin in 849.[5]

A.D. 845.

A.D. 846.

A.D. 847.

A.D. 849.

One is glad, too, to read that Felim came to a bad end about

[1] *An. Ult.* 844.

[2] Or Maelsechnaill.

[3] *An. Ult.* 844, *Gaill.* xv. 'One year before the drowning of Njall Caille; two years before the death of Feidhlimidh.' *Gaill.*

[4] *F. M.* 845.

[5] Ibid. 847. I am not sure that this date is not erroneous, and that the event referred to is not contemporaneous, and in part connected with, the coming of a Danish fleet into Irish waters. See next page, and chapter XI.

the same time. He had been harrying the land attached to the Abbey of Clonmicnois, and dedicated to St. Kieran, founder of the abbey. But when he returned from there to Durlass the saint rose from his grave to pursue him—so the chronicle says—and there, appearing to Felim as in a dream, he gave him a blow with his staff, whence sprang internal injuries from which the king died. He died on the 18th of August, 847,[1] 'by the miracle of God and Kieran.' And, knowing what history is, we are not surprised to find that by the 'Felim party' he is described as 'the most religious clerk in all Ireland during his day.'

Not that this meant anything at all like a cessation of the Viking raids. They went on as constantly as ever, fresh fleets always appearing to supply the losses of the old. But the invaders did not again attempt to seize a large portion of the country and erect a kingdom there. We must picture them—for we cannot rehearse the wearisome catalogue of their attacks during the second half of this Viking Age—confining themselves henceforth chiefly to settlements upon the coast, which settlements were eventually grouped into three 'kingdoms' (so called)—the three Norse kingdoms of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick. After a struggle for mastery between the two nationalities of Vikings, for the Danes revisited

A.D. 852. Ireland in 852,[2] the whole body of Vikings agreed to acknowledge a sort of over-king whose title was no doubt a copy of that of the Irish Ard-Ri, or King of Tara.

A.D. 853. The first of these 'kings of all the Northmen in Ireland' is a certain Olaf the White,[3] who has his connections with the rulers of the Scottish islands, the Earls of the Hebrides, and in a remoter way with some of the early settlers in Iceland. Authentic history—that of the Christian chroniclers—almost turns away from the Northmen in Ireland and Scotland during the latter part of the ninth century. But on the other hand the Icelandic traditions begin to take some notice of them.

[1] Probably. See *Gaill*, xv. [2] *Ult.* 850, 851. *Gaill*, xx.
[3] *F. M.* 851; *Ann. Ult.* 852.

Before the Norsemen came the Irish had cared little about sea-ports or the use of fleets. Their boats were of the kind known as coracles—a wicker frame covered with skin. The rudest and most primitive form of the coracle is still in use in the west. It is one of those primitive constructions which seem to belong to all ages and all nations. We can find an exact parallel to it in the boat described by Herodotus as being in use upon the Euphrates six hundred years before our era.

It was to the Norsemen that Ireland owed the beginning of a fleet, and of such commercial prosperity as she has ever had. The Vikings of Norse blood were, so far as appears, of rather a different calibre from the Danish Vikings of the Continent and of the later invasions of England. While these last were filled with political ambitions, were colonizers and conquerors, *those* were imbued with commercial notions, and were conquerors and traders. How significant in this light is the discovery of a Viking interment, which was made a year or two ago in the Hebrides.[1] The man had been boat-buried after the heathen rites—though there were likewise some traces of Christian symbolism, crosses and so forth, on the tomb—and he had been a warrior who had doubtless died in his harness, which, with his sword, spear, and battle-axe, was placed by his side. His horse had been buried with him, and one of the big bones of the horse had been nearly cut in two by a sword or axe—no doubt in the hero's last battle. But along with all this war-gear there was found buried with the Viking leader a pair of scales—curious type of the double nature of his life as a soldier and a tradesman! It was, let it be remembered, the Norse or Danish kings of Dublin who, about A.D. 1000, introduced the first native *coinage* into Ireland, till which date such a medium of exchange was almost unknown in this backward country.

[1] At Colonsay, West Hebrides. The discovery was made by a descendant of the Hy-Njall, Mr. Malcolm M'Niel, on the estate of Sir John M'Niel, of Colonsay House. The remains were exhibited in the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art by Mr. William Galloway, to whom I have been indebted for a description of them.

Though there must be less Scandinavian blood in Ireland than here, the Northmen seem at their first coming to have mingled more with the rest of the people, identified themselves more with the national politics, so to speak, of Ireland, than they did at their first coming into England. The reason of this may very well have been the anarchic condition of the former country, which, whatever the point they wished to attack, secured for the invaders some allies. Let us note one proof only of the admixture of Celtic and Scandinavian blood during the Viking occupation of Ireland—the extreme commonness at this very day in all Scandinavian countries of the name Niel and its derivatives Neilsson Neilsen, &c.—our Nelson probably. Yet that name is no Scandinavian, it is true Irish; and every Scandinavian Niel or Njall from (or before) Burnt Njall down to our Niels, Nielssons, and Nelsons, must doubtless have had an Irish ancestor of the race of the northern or the southern Hy-Njall.

Cormac is another Irish or Celtic name which became common in Scandinavian countries, especially in Iceland. Such names would spring from marriages—which very early became fully recognized—between the Vikings and the Irish. It was not long before many of the wild Irish began to abjure their Christianity and their old allegiance, and to embrace the rare opportunities for 'agitation,' which an alliance with the invaders opened out. So that there grew up a new class of heathen Irish who threw in their lot with the Vikings, followed their standards, and fought against their former kings. They were known as the Gaill-Gaedhil, or Irish Foreigners.

On the other hand, as we have seen, it was the Vikings who brought Irish political life down to the sea, and taught the Irish, or retaught them, the uses of navigation for purposes of policy and business and war. Formerly the sea had belonged only to the religious life of the country—the religious and intellectual life. The capital of ancient days had lain in the 'middle kingdom' (Meath). Now the Norsemen brought it down to the coast. They crushed the monasteries, expelled the monks and clerks; and learning and piety went forth

sorrowing to seek new homes, doctors and scholars flocking in immense numbers to the Continent. In the place of the religious homes grew up the trading stations which the Norsemen erected all round the coast, and which held the germs of a certain civilization, though of a new kind.

CHAPTER VII.

LEWIS THE PIOUS. THE CONQUESTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.

THE year 795, which we may take to be, as nearly as possible, the real beginning of the Viking era was, so it happens, likewise the year in which a body of Irish monks first found their way as far as Iceland, till then a desert island.[1] By so doing they completed the work of the Irish Church, and, so far as territorial extension goes, the dominion of Christendom in the West.

Or had they quite completed it? Long years after, the earliest Norse settlers in Greenland[2] heard tell from the natives of that place of a settlement upon the coast 'opposite,' but far off, of a body of strangers whom the Eskimo described as walking together in processions, dressed all in white, carrying long staves with cloths hanging from them, and speaking or crying out in a peculiar fashion.[3] The 'opposite coast' here

[1] This fact is taken from Decuilus *De mensura orbis terrarum*, written 825. In that the discovery of Iceland is placed thirty years earlier.

[2] Towards the end of the tenth century.

[3] Þorfinns Saga Karlsefnis, c. p. 162–3, and Landnáma, ii. c. 2. Quoted in K. Maurer, *Bekehrung des norw Stammes zum Christenthume*, i. p. 47 *note*. The country was also called *Hvitramannaland*, or 'White Men's Land,' and *Irland hit mykla* 'Greater Ireland.' In the *Aarbog for nordisk*

spoken of must have been some part of North America—that Vínland (Wine-land), probably, which the Norsemen afterwards discovered and partly settled; and in the description given by the Eskimo of these strangers has been recognized the description of Christian missionaries, walking in processions in their surplices, singing, and carrying their wax tapers, their crosses, and banners.

It is curious enough to think of Christian chants in this early age waking the echoes upon the lonely American shore. Such processions and such chants were at the same time rising from like bodies of Irish monks in all the islands of North-Western Europe—the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Faroes, Iceland—until the Vikings came and silenced them for ever. On this work the red-handed Norse sailors were even now engaged, killing these ill-starred 'papas,' 'papays,' whose swan-song, we may hope, lingered reproachfully in their ears.

Somewhere, then, between 795 and the middle of the ninth century, the Irish Missionary Church completed its work by carrying Christianity to Iceland, and (if we may believe it) to the coast of America; and almost immediately there began the process of undoing its work at the hands of the Vikings, who were not only now, in the early years of the ninth century, murdering all the communities of monks whom they found scattered over the north seas and the Scottish coasts and islands, but had already struck at the very root or fountain-head of the 'movement' in Ireland itself. This was their first achievement. The next was to attack in a more direct way the great commonwealth of Christianity, the Frankish Empire.

Towards Denmark and towards the Baltic Christianity had been extending her borders. It had been a great event when Boniface penetrated far into woody Hesse and founded in this wild country his monastery of Fulda, throughout the Middle

Oldkyndighed, 1887, there is an interesting paper by Prof. Sophus Bugge on Halluland, Markland, and Vínland, the three Scandinavian settlements in America. These three places he identifies, respectively, with Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. It has been usual to place Vínland much further south, about the State of New York.

Ages one of the most famous and powerful of the religious houses of Germany. Fulda lay not far from Geismar, where the oak of Thor had fallen, not far from Gudensberg, or Wuotan's-berg where the Fulda river joins the Weser. This forefront of Christendom, so soon as the Saxon resistance was broken down, received many fresh supports. Paderborn was made into a Bishopric. The site of Paderborn, we have said, was almost identical with the site of Aliso, and Aliso might be called the capital of the greater Roman Germany which subsisted for just twenty years, from A.U.C. 742–762 (B.C. 12 to A.D. 9); from which date the power of the Old Empire in the north began to ebb. Now, therefore, civilization, Christendom, or the New Empire, had won back what the old had lost. The first two Bishops of Paderborn were Saxons who had been torn from their heathen parents when young, and educated at the monastery of Wirzburg. Near the mouth of the Weser lay two other Bishops' Sees, Bremen and Verden: Münster, a fourth, lay between the Ems and the Rhine, comprising in its diocese just that part of Saxony which approached nearest to the latter river. In the reign of Lewis Halberstadt and Hildesheim, between the Weser and the Elbe, and Hamburg at the mouth of the Elbe, were added to the ecclesiastical strongholds.[1]

There was, besides, another way in which the influences of Christianity and civilization were spreading towards the Scandinavian countries; the peaceful road of commerce. The greatest commercial city of Northern Europe in those days was Dorstad.[2] Only the site of it can now be discovered in the little town of Wyk-bij-Duustede, on the Leck branch of the Rhine. It was, in fact, ruined by the incursions of the Vikings into Frisia during the ninth century. But in the earlier years of this century it still rose proudly out of the plain, and boasted of its many churches, its many priests, and, what seems less a

[1] Hamburg was built in Charlemagne's reign.

[2] *Cf.* K. Maurer *Bekehrung des Norweg. Stammes zum Christenthume*, I. i. § 3.

matter for self-gratulation, its many poor.[1] Dorstad stood at the edge of the more civilized part of the Netherlands. North of it the people were poor and wild fishermen and peasants. It was not long since they had killed the greatest of English missionaries; they were still on good terms with the Danes. But south of Dorstad there had begun to spring up those manufacturing industries for which the Low Countries were celebrated all through the Middle Ages. The Danes on their side, were learning that love of luxury, and a rather special love of woven stuffs and wearing apparel, which characterized the later Vikings. Before they took to harrying Dorstad, and killing their goose with the golden eggs, many a Dane had no doubt been there in a more peaceful guise. Here they would come under the influence of Christian preaching. Except where it amounted to an act of submission, many heathens had no objection to baptism when it came 'in the way of business.'

The monk of St. Gall has a story of which we may say, at any rate, that it is *ben trovato.*[2] On one occasion when a number of the Northmen presented themselves for baptism, the linen garments which the newly-baptized catechumens wore, and, it seems, got as a present, ran short. So they had to cut them up into strips—in much the same way no doubt, and upon the same principle that we may see, in our day, a college tutor as he hands the graduates up to the Vice-Chancellor apportion his hands into their ten digits and each homager embrace a thumb or single finger. One of the Danes took this economy in garments very ill, and cried out, 'I have been baptized twenty times, and always before you gave me an excellent white garment; the rag that you have given me this time is more fit for a swineherd than a soldier.'

There might be other reasons for conformity. The Christians would not trade with the unbaptized. In the Icelandic sagas we not infrequently read of men who were pure Odin-

[1] Vita S. Anscari c. 20 (Pertz ii. 705). *Ibi sunt ecclesiæ plurimæ et sacerdotes et clerici; ibi indigentium multitudo.*

[2] *Gesta Kar. M.* ii. 19 (Pertz, ii. 762; Bouquet v. 134).

worshippers, undergoing the ceremony simply on this account. But even so they would stroll now and then into the Christian churches and come under their spell.

II.

The Frankish Empire had no more trouble with the Danes after the death of Godfred in A.D. 812. The great emperor died two years later and was succeeded by his son Lewis.

A.D. 812.

When great kings die their work does not die with them, but goes on through the impulse which they gave and in the direction they determined. Their successor seems to contemporary eyes to be carried to greater heights than they have attained; for all that his character or fortunes may have in them the germ of decay, as certainly as the others' held the germ of growth. So it was with the king who now mounted the throne of the Franks and assumed the imperial diadem—Ludovicus Pius, Lewis the Pious, Ludwig der Fromme, as the Germans call him; or as the French, translating his epithet in the classical sense, Louis le Debonnaire—Lewis the Kind-hearted.

A.D. 814.

The fabric was complete which his ancestors had toiled to build. From beginnings modest enough, amid the flats and marshes of the Low Countries, a single family had risen by well-defined steps until it came to control the destiny of all Western Europe—had risen through many of its members by just and open means, 'not taking account in their judgments,' as is said of one of Lewis's ancestors,[1] 'of the difference between poverty and wealth, rendering to the people the things which are the people's and to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;' in some by more questionable actions. Of the special four princes whom we count as the builders-up of the Carling House—Pippin of Heristal, Charles *Martellus*, Pippin the Short, each seems alone great enough to be the founder of a dynasty, until the achievements of all are thrown into the shade by those

[1] Pippin of Landen. See *Vie de Pepin*, in Guizot's *Mémoires*, &c.

of the fourth in the category, Charles the Great. And now the fifth in descent was about to reap the fruit of this slow harvest; and in part through his own fault, in part through the unkindness of Fortune or the operation of unseen and inevitable forces of decay, he was about to dissipate all this rich inheritance.

As yet all was well. Where Christian Europe had been a congeries of hostile nations, it appeared now more like a God-governed commonwealth, at peace within itself, at war only with the enemy outside its gates. A sense of security and settlement was everywhere shown. Men began to build, to plough, to plant gardens, to raise basilicas—constructive arts of all kinds progressed.[1]

Only in naval and military architecture they were not so active—a dangerous omission with a black cloud already gathering in the north. In respect of the latter there had been no real revival of the art since the days when the Roman power fell. Such strong fenced cities as Northern Europe possessed were strong in virtue of the Roman walls which still stood round them; palisades and rude earthworks did duty where these were wanting.[2] In respect of naval architecture, no one till just the end of the eighth century dreamt of the construction of ships of war; so peaceful seemed all the ways of the sea. But when the first Viking raids upon Northumbria had sent a thrill through Europe, and when Charles himself had had some experience of what these new sea foes were like, he lost, it must be said, no time in setting on foot the building of a navy.[3]

Charles's foresight had, indeed, left nothing essential uncared for. Before his death he settled the succession to the vast dominion which was under his sway.[4] He had outlived many

[1] Violet le Duc. *Dic. de l'Architecture*, s.v. Architecture.

[2] Id. *L'Architect. militaire au Moyen Age;* and Dict. i. 336–337.

[3] Einhard, *Vita*, 17 (Pertz, ii. 452). Anonymi *Vita Hl. Pii Imp.* 15 (The Astronomer) (P. ii. 614). The defences on the Rhone and the Garonne of which the Astronomer makes mention were, however, not designed, as he supposes, against the Northmen, but against the Mohammedan Corsairs. (See preceding chapter, and Einhard, *l.c.*)

[4] Thegan, *Vita Hludovici Imp.* 5 (Pertz, ii. 591).

of his children. One son, Charles, whom we catch sight of fighting against the Saxons, had predeceased him. So had a second son, Pippin, whom we have also seen being anointed by Pope Adrian; Pippin, however, left a natural son of his own, Bernard. Charlemagne's third[1] son, Lewis, was designated the heir to the empire, and succeeded on the death of his father in 814; while Bernard became King of Italy: Italy which included Carinthia and (nominally at least) Pannonia, and the more southern provinces to the Adriatic[2]—the *Italia irredenta* of to-day.

During the lifetime of his father Lewis had been made king of Aquitaine, and his gentle rule had won to at least a temporary peace the quick, turbulent inhabitants of that kingdom. He had restored to the landholders of the country many estates whereof his grandfather Pippin had deprived them. We have a picture of him in these days, adopting the national costume of Aquitaine to please the people; and of his iron father, when reports came to him of his son's success, calling him to his camp and embracing him in the eyes of all the Court.[3]

Lewis was in these days a great reader of the Latin classics: he gave up profane studies when he became more serious in later life. He had in truth had the best education 'that money could buy,' or, rather, such as no money could have bought; for his tutor was William, Count of Toulouse or of Orange, a hero and a saint, whom priests and people conspired to honour. To the one he was St. William of Toulouse; to the other he was Guillaume au Court-nez, Guillaume Fierebras, about whom and whose kin they sang in after-years their five-and-twenty Chansons de Geste.[4] Lewis's familiarity

[1] Fourth if we include an earlier Pippin, a hunchback, who is sometimes spoken of as a bastard, sometimes as legitimate. On account of his deformity he was never thought of as a possible successor.

[2] Einhard, *Vita*, 15 (P. ii. 451). 'The sea-coast towns he left to the Emperor of Constantinople.'

[3] Anon. (Astron.), *Vita Hl. Imp.* 4, 7, 11, 12, 19 (Pertz, ii. 609, &c.).

[4] Leon Gautier, *Epopée Française*, vol. iv. This volume is entirely taken up with the 'Gestes' relating to Guillaume Fierebras and his family.

with literature, Latin literature, must have pleased his Latin subjects. Charles, his father, had reverence enough for learning, but he was an *opsimathes*, a 'late learner'; and, hard as he worked in his hours of leisure, had never time to make any great progress—never quite learnt to write, for example.[1]

Lewis was not the less a good German. He healed when the opportunity came the wounds of Saxony left so bleeding by Charles;[2] so that a contemporary chronicler tells us that in his quarrels with his sons, in all the sad troubles which clouded his latter years, the emperor trusted more to his Saxons and to his other German subjects than to the Franks.[3]

But in far more important ways the Emperor Lewis worked to bring unity into the political and religious life of the commonwealth over which he ruled. He drew closer—too close, perhaps—that union of the State and the Church which it was the business of the Carling House to establish, and which was at last visibly symbolized in the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire. Lewis embodied in his own person the ideas of 'holiness' and of 'empire.' He was the first Royal Saint, the first of an order of which there were many examples in the ages immediately succeeding him. Before Lewis's day the 'saints' upon the throne had been of the type of St. Gontran[4] of Burgundy—good, easy men, who loved wine and women and left their people alone. There had been saints in the Carlovingian House and connected with it—St. Arnold of Metz, St. Pippin of Landen—none of whom had worn the crown. Then there was Carloman, Pippin the Short's elder brother; he had had a 'call'; but had thereupon resigned his crown after reigning only one year. Charlemagne himself was afterwards reckoned a saint, but could scarcely have been so in his lifetime, save of the Gontran type. Lewis was of a very different pattern from these; and the type which he instituted was reproduced in later days by many other kings—by Robert II. of the Cepetan line,[5] by the Emperor Henry the Lame in Germany, by our

[1] Einhard, *o.c.* 25 (P. ii. 457); *cf.* Mullinger, *Schools of Charles the Gt.*, beg. [2] Thegan, *o.c.* 14. [3] Anon. *o.c.* 45 (P. ii. 633).
[4] Guntchramnus. [5] Author of a fine Latin hymn, *Veni Sancte Spiritus.*

Edward the Confessor in a certain degree. Ælfred still better deserves to be included in the list, which ends with another Lewis, he who died under the walls of Tunis.

Lewis the Pious was the first Carlovingian prince *porphyrogenitus*. Charles was something of the self-made man—he was the self-made emperor at all events—and the spirit of his ancestors, rough, genial country gentlemen, was strong in him. Lewis was graver, gentler, more self-contained; 'never laughed loud,' says Thegan;[1] 'was not choleric.' We have the emperor's picture drawn for us by this nobleman and priest. He was 'slow to anger, quick to pity; immensely pious; prays with tears.' He 'trusted too much to his counsellors,' Thegan complains, all his time being given to Psalm-singing as it were. These counsellors were chiefly clerics, and, besides, of shamefully low extraction—an offence in the eyes of Thegan. And even in our eyes there is some ground for the complaint. The clerical class—the lower ranks of it especially—were still the representatives of the Roman-Celtic population, and, putting aside national fickleness, it was impossible for these to be heartily friendly to such a German dynasty as that of Heristal.

For the rest, Lewis was of middle height only[2] (a striking contrast to his father), but with long, slender legs, strong chest and arms, fine hands and fingers. 'None came near him in throwing the javelin or drawing the bow. He had an open countenance, lips neither too thick nor too thin, large bright eyes, and a long nose'—of that thinness belike which often goes with the religious character. This is Thegan's portrait of the Emperor Lewis.

Always, we may surmise, of a somewhat superstitious nature, and standing greatly in awe of celestial phenomena, Lewis, in middle life, received a deep impression from an accident which nearly proved fatal to him. This led to what, in modern religious parlance, would be

A.D. 817.

[1] Thegan, *o.c.* 19, 20 (P. ii. 594).

[2] At the time he mounted the Imperial throne, likewise of middle age (36).

called his 'conversion.' He was passing along a wooden gallery attached to his palace at Aix, when the building fell about his ears, killing some of his attendants and injuring others. Lewis himself was badly hurt. After that date he gave up the profane literature he had delighted in, became markedly devout,[1] and at last, at a critical time, was with difficulty dissuaded from laying down his sceptre and taking the tonsure.[2] A.D. 819.

Of the many difficulties which encompassed his own throne, Charles, as it seemed, had left scarcely any to his successor. The long-lived Lombard quarrel was over; Aquitaine was at peace; even the treacherous region of the Pyrenees, which had brought upon the Franks such famous disasters in past times, was tranquil, at least for a while. In the parts of Europe which most concern our history an extraordinary quiet had succeeded to the long turmoil. The Saxon war had died down in the ashes of the Saxon homesteads; but now the people were really settling into peace, and new homesteads, new buildings of many kinds—forts and churches—were rising in their territory. The different sees—bishoprics and abbeys—which Charles had founded were so many strongholds of the new reign of law and order. Their musical bells rang out over regions where the sacred groves had been desecrated, where Goddess Nerthus was no more borne from place to place in her shrouded car. Lewis added in after-years to these strongholds of Christianity. Hamburg claimed the wizard stream of the Elbe, and looked thence wistfully after Christian missionaries who had wandered into the far north. To the Scandinavian lands, with dreams of new spiritual conquests, the thoughts of Lewis turned; while it so chanced that the internal condition of the country was especially favourable to his designs.

III.

Godfred, King of Jutland, had, as we have seen, died by the hands of an assassin while he was preparing an expedition

[1] Einhard, *Ann.* 817; Anon. *Vita*, 28. [2] Anon. *Vita*, 32.

for the invasion of Frankland. His nephew and successor, Hemming,[1] sent to make peace with the emperor, and withdrew his army out of reach.[2] Two years later Hemming died; and his death was the signal for a disputed succession and the outbreak of a civil war in Denmark, of which the causes, the rights and wrongs, cannot now be discerned.[3] Such disputed successions were too common among the German peoples, with their uncertain succession laws, to encourage much speculation on their origin. Be it enough for us, as it was enough for the empire, that the war for many years crippled the strength of the Danes and made them impotent for evil outside their own country. At first on one side stood Siegfred, the nephew of Godfred,[4] and on the other Anulo, the grandson of a certain Harald, 'formerly king.'[5] The two parties joined battle in a great engagement. The Frankish chroniclers give us fabulous accounts of the number of the slain.[6] Both leaders fell—Siegfred and Anulo. But the party of the latter was victorious; it chose as successors to Hemming the two brothers of Anulo, Harald and Reginfred; and they extended their rule, as appears, not only over Denmark (Jutland, the Isles, and Skönen), but over the Norwegian Viken[7] also.

A.D. 812.

But now the sons of Godfred appear upon the scene. They

[1] Or near successor. See ante p. 135, note [4].

[2] Einhard, *Ann.* (P. i. 199).

[3] In the opinion of the present writer, at any rate, they cannot. Much learning, and even more ingenuity, has been expended in enlarging the known facts of Danish history at this period by the aid of mythic history from the Sagas; from, in the case of this Godfred, the history of the *Ynglinga Saga* and the *Ynglinga-tal.* See, *e.g.*, Munch's *Norske F. H.*; Storm's *Kritiske Bidrag til Vikingetidens Historie*, b. ii., and in *Hist. Tidsk.* iii. 58–79; also Howorth in *Tr. of R. Hist. Soc.* vi. and vii. But how vain these speculations are is demonstrated in *Corp. P. B.* i. 242. Compare also Steenstrup, *Indledning i Normt.* 68–80.

[4] 'Nepos Godfridi regis,' Einhard. The most natural supposition with regard to Siegfred is that he was son of the last Siegfred and nephew of Godfred. Afterwards Godfred's sons came into the field.

[5] 'Nepos Herioldi quondam regis,' Einhard.

[6] 10,940, Einhard (P. i. 199). Another MS. reads 10,300. 14,000 Adam of Bremen (Pertz, vii. 290).

[7] *I.e.*, Westfold.

had fled to Sweden,[1] whence they gathered forces enough to drive out Harald and Reginfred in their turn. These two first wandered eastward into the territory of the Abodriti, their nearest Slavonic neighbours—a territory that is Mecklenburg nowadays. Thence they returned a year later, tried their fortunes once more, and were defeated. Reginfred was slain[2] and Harald again driven forth.[3] Harald turned this time towards the Franks, and sent to pray for the assistance of the Frank emperor; and Lewis, who had just mounted the throne, embraced this occasion for a 'spirited' foreign policy'—rather, we may believe, with an eye to religious than to political interests. Balderic, Count Balderic (of Friuli),[4] a highly distinguished officer of the empire, was told off to assist Harald. In 819 Harald was for a while restored, or at least admitted to a share of the kingdom.[5]

A.D. 814.

A.D. 815.

A.D. 819.

This was an opportunity for edging in some Christian teaching along with military aid. Two men beside Lewis had this aim at heart; men highly distinguished in the politics of those days, trusted councillors of Lewis as yet—afterwards the mainstay of his opponents—one was Ebbo, Bishop of Rheims, the other Wala, Abbot of Corvey. The biographers of Lewis, Thegan more especially, and most of the chroniclers have nothing but ill to say of the former. He was of low origin, had been raised to his position under favour of Lewis, who was his foster-brother, and repaid this favour by the basest in-

[1] 'Apud Suiones,' Einhard.

[2] The elder of the two sons of Godfred was also slain (Einhard *l.c.*).

[3] Einhard, *Ann.* (Pertz, i. 201), *Chron. Moiss.* ii. A.D. 813–4 (P. ii. 259). According to Adam of Bremen, i. 17 (Pertz, vii. 291), Harald first drove out his brother Reginfred, 'who became a Viking.' This is the reason why Jessen and Storm have identified this Reginfred with Ragner Lodbrog, who by Saxo Grammaticus is also made an opponent of Harald the Baptized. But this Reginfred was certainly slain not later than 814. The *Chron. Moiss.* elsewhere speaks of Reginfred being slain by the Abodriti in A.D. 808 (Pertz, i. 308); so that his history is very obscure.

[4] Einhard, *Ann.* (P. i. 202); Anon. *V. Hl.* (P. ii. 620).

[5] Einhard (P. i. 206).

gratitude. That is their account. However this may be, Ebbo threw himself into the missionary work among the Danes with zeal; and it was a work which a wise policy, as well as the interests of religion, would dictate. Ebbo, with Halitgar, Bishop of Cambray, were sent in 823 as missionaries to Denmark. Under the royal and the papal sanction they preached to the people of South Denmark, intoned their masses, lighted their candles, marched in their processions—no man hindering them.[1] Many of the Danes, it is said, were converted at this time. Schleswick (Sliesthorp), the capital of this part of Denmark, was certainly brought once more into close relationship with the empire, and made greater strides than ever before towards becoming a trading station of some importance, a sort of intermediary between Dorstad and the Baltic countries.

A.D. 823.

But the old quarrel between Heathendom and Christendom was not to be composed after this easy fashion, by the peaceful conversion of the Scandinavian folk. We may guess that Harald's leaning for support upon the hateful power of the Cæsar did not stand him in good stead among his countrymen. After he had reigned seven years, subsequent to his restoration, the civil war broke out again. The sons of Godfred were now represented by one, Horik.[2] He had lived for some years in banishment in southern Norway. Now he returned to Denmark, and drove out Harald once again, as it proved, finally. The deposed king turned straightway to the Emperor of the West, and—a sure way of gaining the armed support of Lewis, if he had no other reason—he declared himself converted by the preaching of the missionaries. He was ready to accept baptism. He and his following took ship to sail up the Rhine. Lewis was in his palace of Ingelheim, close to Mainz,[3] when the square white

A.D. 826.

[1] Einhard, *Ann.* (P. i. 211); see letter of Paschal I. (*Regest. Pont.*; *Dip. Dan.* p. 1). It is not dated.

[2] *I.e.*, Hárekr, not Eirekr (Eric), as former historians, and as Howorth still in *Tr. R. H. S.*, vol. vi. See Storm, *Kr. Bidrag*, &c., p. 41, note.

[3] Einhard.

Engilin—ipse pius placito tunc tramite—heim
Advolat . . . (!) Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmina*, iv. 179.

sails of the Danes came doubling up the reaches of the river. Harald had with him his wife and his son, Godfred by name, and a good company of Danish followers. They may have looked out with many feelings, not always of the religious kind, upon the fair country through which they passed; upon the villas and churches which mirrored themselves in the river; most of all, perhaps, they appreciated the rich vine-lands which lay about Ingelheim. Godfred more especially, we may surmise, took in these sights and laid them to heart.

Harald was ready both to receive baptism and to place himself in the hands of the emperor. The spiritual victory, we may be sure, was the dearest in Lewis's eyes. It was at Mainz that the ceremony of Harald's baptism took place; and Boniface's ancient see was the right one to be the witness of these first conversions from Scandinavian lands.[1]

Our court poet, or would-be court poet, Ermoldus Nigellus[2] can hardly contain himself with rapture at the spectacle. Harald, his wife, and his son Godfred, were first baptized. Lewis drew the king out of the water; Judith, the empress, did the same office for Harald's wife; while Lothair, the imperial prince, or rather co-Augustus with his father, drew out the young Godfred—Godfred who was to be heard of in after-days in a very different capacity from that of the white-robed catechumen. Then all the Danish following of Harald imitated the example of their lord. Conversions were wholesale in those days. Nor, except as it might be a mark of submission, or unless some dreaded it as a form of magic, had the Danes any intense objection to this kind of conformity. Frank nobles, or clerics of a sceptical turn, had their own private opinions and their own stories touching these conversions of the heathen; such as that story which we have already quoted from the monk of St. Gallen.

That was not the spirit in which these victories of the Church were regarded by the emperor himself; and Ermoldus Nigellus, the *vates sacer* of such kind as was obtainable in those days, has enough to say upon the glory of the occasion :—

[1] Einh.; Thegan, *o. c.* 33 (P. ii. 597). [2] *Carmina*, iv. 283—end.

O Hludowice, Deo quantas das, magne, catervas!
Quantus odor Christo te faciente meat!
Hæc tibi lucra diu, princeps, servata manebunt;
Abstrahis ore lupi, quæ facis esse Dei.
. . . .

Cæsar ut ecclesiam gressu pervenit honesto,
Exposcit votis more suo Dominum.
Mox tuba Theutonis clare dat rite boatum,
Quam sequitur clerus protinus atque chori.
Miratur Heriold, conjunx mirantur et omnes
Proles, et socii culmina tanta Dei,
Mirantur clerum, mirantur denique templum,
Atque sacerdotes officiumque pium.

Versification such as this is poor indeed. And, if we had nothing else to judge by, we should think meanly of the Roman element in mediæval history. But we must not judge by this. Can we ever rightly judge of the Romans by their verse, even at its best days? In the Latin prose of this time there still lingers a far-off echo of the old majesty of Rome—in the Latin prose as we read it in the letters and allocutions of the great ecclesiastics of the age; best of all in the briefs or bulls of the successor of St. Peter, when we hear him chastising or threatening some sinner in high places:—

'. . . sancimus atque discernimus, ut post secundam vel tertiam admonitionem sanctitatis tuae, quisquis res præfatae ecclesiae, quibus tu aliquando ad usum vel sustentationem illic servientium vel tibi obsequentium fruitus fuisse dignosceris, retinere, et sibi ulterius absque voto tuo vindicare tentaverit . . . tanquam sacrilegus, ab Ecclesiæ gremio atque sacro corpore et pretioso domini nostri Jesu Christi sanguine, donec præsenti decreto nostro acquieverit, habeatur omnibus modis alienus, et tanquam violentus invasor atque tyrannus sit Christianorum communione privatus; ita ut qui hujusmodi in communione susceperit, simili pœna teneatur astrictus.'[1]

There is something, I say, not unmajestic in the ponderous length of these sentences. In reading such there rises up be-

[1] Migne, 119, col. 910. This is a bull directed by Pope Nicholas I. against Hincmar. See Chapter XVI.

fore us, better than in any other way, the vision of the awful holder of the keys, the *servus servorum* pronouncing judgment from his curule chair.

Then beside the Latin prose of this age there was a new form of Latin verse rising up, of a kind unknown to the ancients, where lines were measured by beats and not by feet :—

> O, tu qui servas armis ista mœnia
> Noli dormire, moneo, sed vigila.
> Dum Hector vigil extitit in Troïa,
> Non eam cepit frandulenta Græcia.
> . . . . . .

Or such as this :—

> Noxque illa, nox amara, noxque dura nimium ;
> In qua fortes ceciderunt, prælio doctissimi,
> Pater, mater, soror, frater, quos amici fleverant.

It is in verse of this kind, unspeakably wild and lonely as it sounds at first, growing more and more solemn as the ages advance and as to the music of this measured beat is added the new charm of rhyme, that speaks most clearly the appealing voice of mediæval Catholicism :—

> Quid sum miser tum dicturus ?
> Quem patronem rogaturus ?
> Cum vix justus sit securus.

It was in this wise that the soul of Ancient Rome still informed the body of the New Empire. And it was by weapons drawn from the same armoury that Christianity waged its wars against the heathens of the North.

Merely to recall the labours of missionaries as they are related to us is nothing: so many baptized on this occasion, a church built in that newly conquered territory, a journey made to that far country with doubtful results. We need to try and picture for ourselves the weapons by which this spiritual warfare was carried on. And in doing this we must not think first of all either of Pauline eloquences, or of Luther-Eckius controversies ; but rather of much subtler appeals to fancy and imagination—of music and singing, of church organs and

church bells; these made the effective 'in-sounding' (κατήχησις) to the barbarian ear; and of rites new and strange, terrifying and fascinating, of *incantations* and of believed dooms.

We must picture white-robed processions of priests and acolytes, chanting, carrying lighted tapers (a sight to my mind always wonderfully impressive, and most so by daylight[1]), on far-off shores, in wild and woody places. With varying success and failure these weapons were being, or were to be, employed against the heathen on every soil of Northern Europe; upon grounds where the Vikings sought out the Christians to destroy them, and in territories where ventured the Christian missionaries.

On us the spell of mediæval Catholicism descends most directly from three things: from the Gothic architecture, from church music and from church bells. The first had not yet sprung into existence. There was nothing specially solemn about the basilica churches which at this date gave the pattern of church architecture. Their transformation into the gloomy and impressive Romanesque did not begin before the end of our Viking Age. It was reserved for the descendants of the Vikings themselves to give to the Romanesque building its grandest form. Church bells of the larger sort were now in general use. The Columban monks had not enjoyed their inspiration. We know from numerous finds what sort of bells *their* monasteries possessed—little square ones, no bigger than, and much the same shape as, those which cattle wear abroad, in Switzerland more especially. One might fancy a St. Gallus carrying this type of bell with him to his Helvetian retreats, and the type having descended in our days to the use of cattle. I know not whether this really has been the case. Now from the South (originating with Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, as is generally said) a much finer type of bell had been introduced into the churches. In Bede's day many of the English churches and monasteries, including Bede's own

[1] Impressive, too, I guess, in no common degree to our own forefathers; witness their beautiful imagery for the sun, 'the world's candle'—*woruld-condel* (*Beowulf*)—'God's bright candle.' *Godes condel beorht* (*Brunanburg*).

monastery at Wearmouth, possessed bells of this new type—larger, much more sonorous and affecting, than any before known. Mediæval legend is full of stories of the magic effect of church bells in driving away the spirits of evil. We often see representations of Satan imprisoned under a bell.

Church music, too, had made notable advances in recent years. The first organ was brought to Charlemagne from the East. Two artificers came from the Byzantine Court bringing their new-made instrument. It is to the present—ninth—century, and to the reign (I think) of Lewis the Pious, that belongs the story of a woman who entered the cathedral of Metz and there heard an organ for the first time. She was so overcome by emotion that she fell down dead. And with the use of new instruments of music continued improvements in the arts of singing had gone forward. Gregory I. has been reckoned the inaugurator of this improved church singing, though it is not to be believed that any of the music now called Gregorian really comes from him. We have no musical notation as old as the days of Gregory the Great. The new music spread on all sides. Beda tells us how diligently it was taught in England before his day by John the Archchanter,[1] whom Benedict Biscop brought over to instruct the monks of Wearmouth.

IV.

When Harald returned it was thought wise that some new missionary should accompany the Danes back to Denmark. Wala cast his keen eyes upon a young monk (he was only twenty-five), late of his own abbey, Corbie, now of New Corvey, in Saxony, the daughter monastery of his own. The name of the monk was Anscar (Oscar), one of those blameless lives which

[1] John, the Archchanter of St. Peter's, and Abbot of St. Martin's of Tours (see Beda, *H. E.* iv. 18). It is known that some works on music have been ascribed to Beda, but probably without foundation.

The curious story in the Monk of St. Gallen of the efforts made by Charlemagne to improve the singing in his dominions, and the desire of the Italian instructors to defeat his object and prevent the barbarians, north of the Alps, from rivalling the singing in Italian churches, is likewise characteristic. *Gesta K. M.* i. 10 (Pertz, ii. 735). See also Anonymi, *Vita Hlud. Imp.*, 19 (P. ii. 606).

grow up sporadically in Mediæval History, which come in contact with, and yet scarcely seem to touch, the political life which surrounds them. He was a Saxon; so near a neighbour to the Scandinavian people that he might well enter into their thoughts and understand their questionings of nature. It is fitting that we find him, from boyhood upward, much occupied with speculations upon death, often seeing visions from the world of spirits. When he was quite a child his mother died, and soon after he saw a vision of her walking in the choir of the Virgin along a lovely path. He himself was on a miry, slippery road, and could not get from it to where the procession moved. But the Virgin came to him and admonished him that if he desired to come to their company he must put aside all idleness and frivolity. Anscar obeyed the call; in his fourteenth year he adopted the monastic habit. The death of Charles the Great, which happened at this time, was another event which deeply moved him. Once Anscar himself had beheld this mighty emperor; now was imperial Cæsar turned to clay—and his soul?—one could not be sure.[1] Anscar saw another vision directly afterwards. Peter and John the Baptist came to him, took his soul out of his body and carried him with them to purgatory. Thence to the height of heaven, out of which a voice sounded in his ears, 'Go hence, thou shalt return to me adorned with the crown of martyrdom!' Martyrdom, in fact (or at any rate in the ordinary sense), he never did attain. 'But,' says his biographer, 'I deem that by the many pains and dangers which he suffered in his life the same reward was earned.'[2] The vision gave him an 'unappeasable thirst' after heavenly things. Some years later, in another vision, he was warned that he was especially chosen as an apostle to the heathen.

Anscar, accompanied by a younger volunteer from Wala's household called Autbert, joined Harald and his following on their return journey to Denmark. They began by setting up a

[1] Charles was at any rate, according to the vision of the Monk Wettinus of Reichenau, severely punished in purgatory for his carnal sins (see Walafrid Strabo's poem in Migne, t. 114).

[2] *Vita Anscari*, c. 3.

school in the country, at Schleswick; and Anscar was especially eager in looking out for Danish boy slaves whom he could purchase from the Christian merchants — of Dorstad or wherever it might be—and whom he could instruct in the principles of Christianity and train for the work of preaching to their countrymen. One of the converts obtained in this manner was Rimbert, who afterwards succeeded to the labours and to the honours of Anscar, and who wrote his life.

How hopeful at this time all things looked for the quiet incorporation of the Scandinavian nations into the body of Christendom—at all events if one did but turn one's eyes away from what was going on in a far western island. How different from the days when Godfred was hurling his fleet upon the shore of Frisia. England itself was left at peace just now; was not again troubled till 834. And now envoys came to Lewis from one of the kings of Sweden who seemed likewise to be showing the most hopeful 'dispositions' towards Christianity, and it was determined to send an expedition even to those far regions.[1] The king, from whom the ambassadors came, lived not in the parts of Sweden bordering on the Danish kingdom, but far round in the Lake Mälar country. His capital was Sigtuna, upon the Upsala fjörd. Near it stood the most sacred spot in all Denmark in the days of heathenism, Upsala of the three great mounds (of Odin, Thor, and Frey), and of the sacred grove of which, and of Adam of Bremen's description of it, mention was made in a former chapter. A.D. circ. 830.

This kingdom of Sigtuna in the country of Suithiod was the germ of the later kingdom of Sweden. The fact that we find at this day the capital of Sweden upon Lake Mälar instead of, say, at Götenborg, near to Denmark and to Norway, is due to the ultimate pre-eminence of the Suithiod kingdom. Near Sigtuna itself stood a town which at that time seems to have been a great market—perhaps among different nationalities of the Eastern Baltic[2]: its name was Birca. It is represented by the

[1] *Vita Anscari*, c. 9.

[2] By way of Gothland to the mouths of the Vistula or the Dwina, and hence by the Dnieper to the Black Sea and to Greece (*cf.* Montelius, *op. cit.*).

modern Björkö, an island on Lake Mälar, which the traveller up the lake reaches just after passing the mouth of the Gripsholmsvik.

The earliest coins ever made in Scandinavia come, so it happens, from the site of this Birca; and they are imitations of the money of Dorstad, belonging to the first half of the ninth century.[1] So we may believe that there had been already some communication between Birca and Dorstad. The Life of Anscar simply tells us that (in 829) an embassy came to Lewis from the king of Sweden saying that many of his people had a leaning towards Christianity, and praying that fit persons should be sent to preach to them. Anscar was at once chosen. He left his work among the Danes—no longer a work *in* Denmark, unhappily—and betook himself, in company with a certain brother Witmar, to a perilous journey upon untraversed seas. On their way to Sigtuna, in the train of the returning Swedish envoy, they were attacked by pirates (so piracy, we see, was not reserved altogether for the Christians), and the ship's company only saved themselves by abandoning their vessel and escaping to the shore. Anscar lost all his books, all the gifts to the Swedish king with which Lewis had charged him.

They had to travel by land in a forlorn condition till they reached Birca. Not the less were they well received by the king, Björn, and were allowed to build a church upon the island. In 1834 was celebrated the millenary of the building of this, the first Christian church in Sweden. For some years Christianity kept its little candle burning in this far land. Bishop Gauzbert succeeded Bishop Anscar. But while he held the See, there was a sudden revolt of the Swedes against this new apparition of a foreign creed in their midst. In the tumult Nithard, the nephew of Gauzbert, was killed, and Gauzbert himself was driven forth, and for about seven years Sweden remained without a missionary, until the work was taken up once more by Anscar. For the present this was the limit of Lewis's success in spreading Christianity in the north.

[1] See H. Hildebrand's *Nordens Äldsta Mynt*, in *Journal of R. Hist. Soc. of Stockholm*, 1887, and the present writer's remarks on the same in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, same year.

Harald, moreover, as it turned out, did not gain much by the protection of the great emperor. Lewis could not maintain him on the throne. And eventually the feudality of the Dane had to be maintained, not by any part of Denmark becoming a fief of the empire, but by the carving out from that empire of a fief for the dethroned Harald. He received the county of Rustringia between the German Ocean, the Weser, and the Ems. It was almost the equivalent of the more modern Duchy of Oldenburg. And in addition he got what was of perhaps still greater value, the rich trading town of Dorstad. We have already seen how the Low Countries were even now laying the foundation of that commercial and industrial greatness which distinguished them throughout the Middle Ages. Their woven stuffs were the best in the empire north of the Alps.[1] If these fabrics were 'worth a mass,' or a baptism, Dorstat, the rich emporium of all, was a whetting bait to the cupidity of the Vikings.

By yielding up these provinces to Harald and his kin, Christians became, for the first time, the subjects of the heathens, as a chronicler declares a few years later. And in truth Harald's fief became a very hotbed of Viking troubles in after-years. His next successor—his brother or his nephew Rorik—got the name of *fel Christianitatis*, the gall of Christendom.[2] And his son Godfred—whom we beheld just now drawn out of the water by Lothair, the son of Lewis—what he became in after-years, how he observed his baptismal vows (if he made any), we shall partly see hereafter.

In truth it must be sorrowfully owned that the history of this conversion of Harald and his Danes, the joy which was expended over it at the time, contrasted with what it really meant and what it led to, are abundantly suggestive, and typical of much in the history of the Emperor Lewis.

During these days of early success in the empire, of Lewis's pros-

[1] See *e.g.*, the Monk of St. Gall, i. 26.
[2] Cf. *Ann. Fuld.* 850, and *Prudent.* (P. i. 445).

perity advancing on many different sides by leaps and bounds, Christianity stretching its wings for new flights to the far north, what, we are tempted to ask, had been done in the way of carrying out those soberer plans with which Charles had been engaged during almost his last moments; what especially in the direction of building navies, arming for the coast defence? Now, if men knew it, is the golden time, not likely to come again whether used or neglected. Look far away to the islands of the west—if amid these Nigellus rhapsodies men had time to cast a glance that way—and they would see Viking fleets taking stations all over the Shetlands and the Orkneys, on the northern mainland of Scotland, on the Western Islands, which *they* call the Sudreyer, or *South* Islands. They would see in Ireland such a plundering of monasteries and slaughter of monks as in the days of Charlemagne and Alcuin would have set Europe astir—plunderings in Wicklow, Dublin, Meath, Louth, Down—on all the islands round the Irish coast.

Nay, but there had already been *some* sign of danger nearer home, though it must be said that the one raid of this period was victoriously driven off. In 820 a fleet stood in to the Flanders coast, just succeeded in landing, and burnt a few huts. After that it made for the mouth of the Seine, but without being able to effect a landing. Finally the Viking fleet sailed round the rocky Breton coast to Aquitaine, and accomplished more there (in that anarchical country). It burned a small town, Bouin, a little south of the Loire mouth.[1] As a plundering expedition this one was nothing; as an exploring one it was important. There may once before have been a northern fleet round the Cape of Finisterre,[2] or this may have been the *first* Viking fleet in the Bay of Biscay. Certainly the way in which this fleet was beaten off from one place after another speaks well for the coast defences at this time—six years only after the death of Charlemagne. It was fifteen years after this attack before the Vikings made another one upon the coast of France.

A.D. 820.

[1] Anon. *Vita Hl. Imp.* c. 33 (Pertz, vol. ii. 625).

[2] See above, p. 134.

And now the sun of Lewis the Emperor, which had touched its meridian, began to take a westering course and to diminish its altitude day by day until it sank amid sad contagious clouds to its setting. The catastrophes which now overtook Western Christendom, the gradual dissolution of the Carlovingian Empire, constituted one of the most potent factors in the future successes of the Vikings.

CHAPTER VIII.

CIVIL WAR.

I.

THE date of Harald's baptism may be looked upon as the apogee of the reign of Lewis, nay even as the highest ascendant of the fortunes of the Carling house. We seem to stand midway between the irruption of the wild Franks and the overthrow by them of the Roman rule in Gaul, and the true mediæval era of European history, when a theocratic *Republic* more complex but, in its fashion, not less great than the old Roman Empire, occupied its room.

Times were changed since an earlier Lewis, whom we call Clovis, had laid the foundation of the Frankish monarchy, by breaking the skull of a too independent opposition leader of his day. Such rough-and-ready methods of government would have ill-suited the mild, grave emperor, who now, clad in his golden robes, presided every year over the General Assembly, the *Placitum*, the *Campus Maiae*. Yet not less but much more of outward majesty surrounded the person of this monarch. Each one in the assembly of grandees (the *élite* of the people[1]) had to ask leave before he made a speech, and he kissed the foot of the king ere he began.[2] How, one thinks, the North-

[1] '*Electi populi*,' Ermoldus Nigellus.

[2] Ermoldus Nigellus, i. 137–178, iii. 42 (Pertz, ii. 469, &c.).

men (if any ambassadors from Denmark were present) must have stared at such a ceremony, remembering the rough speech which prevailed at their own *folk-things*, and treasured the memory thereof for the ears of their countrymen. We see, too, when Lewis was minded to wed a second time, these same grandees bringing the fairest of their daughters to him that he might select one for his wife—more after the fashion of an Eastern caliph than a Christian king.

All public life had been brought into a wise order since the Merovingian days. Following the general and excellent custom among the monarchs of his time, Lewis was constantly upon the move, now in one part, now in another of his vast dominions.[1] Wherever he was, he sat once a week to administer justice — not *quarter*-sessions only where he was.[2] The empire?—I am the empire. His person and presence only bound into a whole the diverse interests of Franks and Aquitanians, of Saxons and Provençals. A territorial nobility had begun to grow up in the place of the nobility of service which characterized the Merovingian monarchy.[3] It was now hardly possible to hold one General Assembly for the whole of the wide-stretching empire. Now the Placitum was held at Orleans, now at Nymuegen or Aix, now on the Lake of Constance, now at Augsburg in distant Bavaria. In each case it would be only the grandees most closely attached to the person of the Emperor and those from the neighbouring country who attended. But the presence of the ruler and his immediate court gave a unity to the decisions of all. And everywhere there were the chosen servants of the emperor speeding over the country (*missi dominici*, their official name[4]) inquiring into the affairs of each county or marquisate. The nobles, the counts, and the marquises held their titles by office not by heredity (not as yet), and were liable to dismissal for neglect of

[1] Anon. *Vita Hl. Imp.* 7 (Astronomer) [Pertz, ii. 610].

[2] Formerly, when king of Aquitaine, he had sat thrice a week (Ibid.).

[3] On the Courts of the Merovingian monarchs, see Fustel de Coulange, *La Monarchie Franque.*

[4] Or *missi regii*, *cf.* Du Cange, s.v. and the description in Ermoldus, *Carm.* ii. 489 *sqq.*

duty; as—for one example—was a distinguished soldier of Charlemagne's and Lewis's days, Count Balderic, the same whom we lately saw commissioned to raise an army to help Harald back to his throne in Denmark. Balderic was afterwards made Count of Friuli; but failing to defend his domains against an incursion of Bulgars, he was deprived of his command.[1] A year or two earlier the same punishment fell upon certain wardens of the Spanish marches, when an inrush of Arabs and rebellious Goths found them unprepared. And loud complaints were uttered that they got no worse punishment.[2]

All seemed at peace, even in those regions where Charles's troubles had been greatest. The Lombard dynasty had disappeared; the clangour of the Saxon war had died away; the Caliphs of Cordova were not yet strong enough seriously to threaten the Spanish marches; the Baltic nations were for the moment weaker than they had ever been; and, as we saw, Christendom had already sent its emissaries into Sweden, as far as to Lake Mälar.

Yet there were within that vast body of the Frankish Empire forces which made for decay; as there are forces in every body vast or small, making for decay, and through decay for new growth. It is not difficult to understand what the chief of these were. We have spoken of the two foci of that ellipse which made up Western Christendom—of Aix, the capital of the worldly kingdom, and of Rome, the capital of the Church. Let the equipoise of these two centres of force be altered, and the current of life which revolved round them must be changed. At present the popes were unable to stand alone. They had thrown off allegiance to the Eastern emperors, who were stained by the heresy of Iconoclasm; they would not bear the protection or dictation of the Lombard kings. But they were not yet strong enough to rise independent of all secular support, to preserve unassisted those territorial possessions which they had received as gifts from Pippin and Charlemagne. Leo

[1] Einhard, *Ann.* s.a. 828; Anon. *Vita* (Astron.) (Pertz, ii. 631).
[2] Einhard, 827.

III., who had placed the diadem upon the head of Charles, died two years after his friend and protector. His successor, Stephen V., undertook the arduous journey into Francia to obtain the ratification of his election by Lewis.[1] This was a great triumph for the house of Heristal. Charles had received the diadem at the hands of Leo III.; but Lewis did not wait for the sanction of the Pope before he entered on his imperial succession. On the other hand Stephen acknowledged the emperor's right of veto to his election. Not the less was he, when he came to the Court of Lewis, received by the pious emperor with every honour. Lewis rode to meet him, alighted from his horse and held the Pope's stirrup. Stephen, in his turn, anointed Lewis and his wife Irmingard Emperor and Empress. It was not possible that these two great powers of the Christian Commonwealth should remain for ever thus balanced; and the latter years of Lewis's reign show the beginning of that long struggle between Kaiser and Pope, which lasted all through the Middle Ages, which saw the triumph of one party under Otto III., of the other under Gregory VII., and whose memory survived in the bitter struggles of Guelphs and Ghibellines. We might deem that there was some influence in the magic of a name when we see the first overt steps towards Papal independence taken by Gregory IV., the fifth of the popes who reigned contemporaneously with Lewis the Pius.

The interest for the historian of this period of history—the latter years of Lewis's reign—is that he can, as through a microscope, perceive almost all the conflicting forces which moulded the history of mediæval Europe coming into action, though they are still confined within the compass of a single state. Side by side with the struggles between Pope and Kaiser, we see the principle of nationality beginning to reassert itself. Look for a moment at the empire while it stands undivided. In the centre lies Francia proper—not *France* proper—which extends on both sides of the Rhine, eastward as far as the sources of the Main, westward to the Atlantic, but

[1] Thegan, *Vita Lud. Pii.* 16, 17 (Pertz, ii. 594).

not to the south of the Loire. Of these two Francias, the East Frank country (Franconia), though it had the name of Old Francia, was in reality rather a bastard Frankland, not the country of the old Ripuarian (Rhine bank) Franks, nor yet of the old Saal Franks; but land conquered long ago from the Alamannians. North of Francia lay Frisia and Saxony, which, as they approached the Danish borders, shaded off more and more towards rebellion and heathenism.

We read in the year 837 of the energetic steps that Lewis took to bring the Frisians to obedience; and years after Lewis's death we find a heathen party still powerful among the Saxons, and the younger Lewis, Lewis the German, son of the emperor, obliged to resort to unspeakable severities to bring it into subjection. Through the personal attachment of the Saxons to the emperor this heathen or conservative party seems for the moment to have been inactive. Next to the Saxons came the Thüringians, who, as they bordered not on any heathen German race, may have been without the centrifugal tendencies of the two forenamed peoples. But in them we find coming into play that fatal disunion among the German races which, in spite of all the heroism of her sons, has kept Germany weak so long. For some while the Thüringians and the Alamannians were on ill terms with their neighbours of the great kingdom of Bavaria. Bavaria always held true to her own king, Lewis the German, third son of Lewis the Pious, whether he were at war with his father the emperor or afterwards with his brother Lothair. But (for many years) Alamannia and Thüringia went with the imperial party. Lewis the German was (so to say) a Bavarian first, a German afterwards.

And in the west there were peoples very different in character and history, but inspired with the same spirit of nationality, and a longing, wise or foolish, for Home Rule.

Between the mouths of the Seine and Loire jutted out the wedge-like rocky Armorica or Brittany, with its population of ancient Armoricans and new Britons from Cornwall; a territory never so much as half incorporated with the Frankish kingdom, even now a thorn in the side to the kings of Francia,

as, all through the Middle Ages, it was to be a thorn in the sides of the kings of France.

South of the Loire to the Pyrenees stretched Aquitaine, which, like Saxony, was peaceful during Lewis's early years, but was a source of infinite troubles to Lewis's successor in the West. Under the shadow of the Pyrenees lay the country of the wild Basques, who had inflicted such a defeat upon the troops of Charlemagne, and might reckon themselves independent of the Carling house. And to the east of this Biscay, a little county or marquisate called Gothia or Septimania, and in later Middle Ages the county of Toulouse. It was a *march* against the kingdom of the Arabs in Spain; it was for the present a peaceful county of the empire; but its inhabitants (descendants of the Visigoths in Gaul) sighed for independence as did the Aquitanians.

Far more important than any of these lesser national aspirations, there was the rivalry between France—the Latin-speaking half of the empire—and Germany, which was already beginning to display itself, and of which we find so many proofs in comparing the accounts of events and persons by the French and German annalists of these days.

Curious indeed to think of how many nationalities and how many interests this empire was made up: of toiling Frisians and Flemings, divided even in those early days as they are still, into a rural and a manufacturing population—weavers slow, laborious, peaceful, Christian among the Christian; peasants, wild, half heathen still;[1] of lordly Franks, growing more and more into two nationalities as they stretched across the whole breadth of the empire; of quick, turbulent Aquitanians for ever clamouring after Home Rule, and slow, turbulent Saxons, some of whom still looked back to the days of Widukind or Nerthus of the Woods; of Gascons; of Goths; of Provençals, the most mixed of all populations, the descendants

[1] A most striking instance of the survival of heathen customs among the peasantry of the Lower Rhinelands (Cornelimünster, near Aix), in the twelfth century, is quoted by Grimm (*D.M.* i. 214, ed., Meyer) from the *Chron. Rudolfi* (Pertz, xii. 309), circa A.D. 1133. *Cf.* ante p. 51.

of the Romans—and Provence still held by her Roman traditions, and the forms of Roman government—mingled with the descendants of the Goths, of the Saracens, and with Jews. These last were conspicuous and powerful in the southern provinces. Holding the keys of trade, they boasted an independence of the law as complete as that of any Tammany Ring of modern days. They had the best intelligence at Court, could corrupt all governments, from the simplest city administration to that of the greatest counts and margraves. Judith, the second wife of Lewis the Pious, is said to have taken the Jews under her protection. It may be believed that there was a strong anti-Semitic party in the empire. At the head of it stood most of the high ecclesiastics—none more vehement than the archbishop who lived most within the circle of Jewish influence, the famous Agobard of Lyons.[1] A mighty shock was given to the conscience of Christianity when a certain learned deacon, Bodo, once a favourite with Lewis and his empress, apostatized to Judaism, let his hair and beard grow, girt himself with a sword, and took a Jewish name, Eleazar. He married a Jewess, and eventually betook himself to what was the paradise of the nation in those days, the equable rule of the Caliphs of Cordova.

The papal policy itself was concerned with national aspirations. Besides the aggrandizement of their office, the popes headed the party which cried, 'Italy for the Italians.' And as formerly they had got rid of Goths and Lombards, they were determined now to free the land from the yoke of the Franks.

The Frankish custom of inheritance again made for disintegration. For that custom required the equal distribution of possessions among the legitimate sons of the deceased. It was by good fortune that only one legitimate male heir had survived to Charlemagne. Charlemagne had intended Italy for Pippin; and after Pippin had died without legitimate heirs, his natural son, Bernard, was allowed to retain the crown of Italy, and he himself looked upon it as his by right. It was

[1] Agobard, *De insolentia Judæorum; De Jud. Superstit.* (Migne, t. 104).

therefore by an accident that the vast empire of Charlemagne descended to his son unbroken.

But however far Teutonic custom might sanction such divisions, the necessities of the time (or what seemed the necessities of the time), and still more the dreams of far-sighted politicians sanctioned an exactly opposite policy. The ideal of that policy was the restoration of the ancient monarchy of Rome, the seamless garment of undivided power,[1] which was, it was thought, as much a part of the Divine polity, as the flawless robe of an undivided faith. This was the principle which seemed to have been proclaimed on the famous Christmas Day of 800, and which the great statesmen-ecclesiastics of this age, upheld—Wala, of Corbie, the king's cousin; Agobard of Lyons, the most accomplished and enlightened ecclesiastic of this reign; Ebbo of Rheims, the ambitious but far-sighted prelate.

When Lewis had that nearly fatal accident, whereof we spoke in the last chapter, which, showing him the frailty of human life, gave his thoughts so serious a turn, A.D. 817. he bethought himself of taking measures to ensure the peaceable succession of his sons. A state paper was accordingly drawn up, known in those days as the *Divisio Imperii*,[2] which set forth the principles of succession. Lewis had at this time three sons—Lothair, Pippin, and a younger Lewis. Lothair was to succeed his father as emperor, and reign directly in all parts of the empire save in two kingdoms, Aquitaine and Bavaria, which were bestowed on his brothers, Pippin and Lewis. But they would only reign as under-kings, subject to the seniority or seigneury of Lothair.[3] Thus we see that when the *Charta Divisionis Imperii* was drawn up the *Monarchia* idea was dominant. During the lifetime of his father the kingdom of Italy was assigned to Lothair.

Bernard's right to his kingdom was not recognized by the *Charta Divisionis*, and on the promulgation of this document he made an attempt at rebellion which was soon

[1] Dante, *Monarchia*.
[2] Pertz, *Leges*, i. 198 *sqq*.
[3] Ibid. Pref. and Caps. 4–8.

suppressed. This was Italy's first stroke for independence since she lost her Lombard kings. Bernard was brought as a prisoner to Lewis, who, with what would probably then be deemed by most an act of unusual clemency, ordered his life to be spared, and that he should only be blinded.[1] But the operation was clumsily performed—some said with a designed clumsiness at the instigation of the Empress Irmingard; Bernard lingered but a few days and died. However much public opinion may have exonerated Lewis, his conscience did not exonerate him. He continued to brood over the event; and years after, when Charlemagne or any earlier king would have clean forgotten the matter, remorse drove him to do public penance for his sin. That Irmingard repented of her part in the business we are not told.

The year following Bernard's death Lewis undertook an expedition into Brittany, and made more way towards reducing this people to a real subjection to the empire than any of his predecessors had done.[2] This was in 818. In the four years which followed there were other successes: some upon the exactly opposite edge of the empire to Brittany, in Pannonia, in other words in East Austria and Hungary west of the Danube. Pannonia had been practically independent until Lewis sent his army thither and compelled its submission. Whereupon some of the Slav peoples farther east likewise acknowledged his over-lordship; so that now his empire almost trenched upon that of the Turcoman race, the Bulgars, who lay upon the Lower Danube, on the borders of the Greek Empire. The Khan of the Bulgars sent a threatening letter to Lewis, warning him not to overstep his boundaries. And while all this was going forward in the East, Pippin, King of Aquitaine, Lewis's second son, was engaged in subduing rebels in Gascony (820), and Harald, as we saw, was being helped back to his throne in Jutland.

A.D. 818.

[1] Astronomer (Pertz, ii. 622–3); Thegan, *o.c.* 22–3 (P. ii. 596).

[2] The Duke of Brittany, Murcomannus, was slain. Thegan, *l.c.* &c. Murman (Morwan) Ermold. Nigellus, iii. 55, &c.

One sad event had happened, besides the death of Bernard. While Lewis was away upon his Brittany expedition, Irmingard, his wife, fell sick, and almost immediately upon his return she died. It was within a year of Bernard's death, as we note, of which Irmingard had been perhaps guilty. Whether Lewis knew this or thought of this we do not know. What we do know is that at the death of the empress he fell into such a condition of melancholy or remorse that the fear was entertained that he would now imitate his great-uncle Carloman and retire into a cloister. In this fear his courtiers hastened to press him to remarry. They brought the fairest of their daughters to him that he might select from them a wife. His choice fell upon a beautiful and gifted Judith, daughter of Count Welf of Altdorf—Bavarian Swiss upon the father's side, Saxon on the mother's.[1] From this marriage more than from anything else sprang the ten thousand ills which descended upon the Frankish Empire and upon Christendom during the next hundred years. This second marriage did not immediately make a change in the disposition of the territory of the empire; Lewis had at first only a daughter by this second marriage, and the *Divisio Imperii* was confirmed in 821. It was not until two years after this that Judith gave birth to her first and only male child, Charles.

A.D. 819.

The year previous to that of Charles's birth Frankland had beheld with wonder Lewis, on whose conscience the memory of Bernard's death lay heavy, doing public penance therefor,[2] an act of the saint king's the like of which had not been heard of till now. The year itself of Charles's birth was an *annus infaustus*, did the augurs of the time note as much. It was a year of earthquakes and divers supernatural signs which greatly disquieted the soul of the emperor. Perhaps the birth of the young prince himself was the most inauspicious sign of all, pregnant of future ills which it needed no great prophet to foretell.

A.D. 822.

[1] Thegan, c. 26. [2] Anon. *Vita Hl. Imp.* c. 35; *Ann. Xant.* a.a.

II.

The year of the baptism of Harald at Mainz there was an alarm from the Spanish-Arabic quarter. Many years previously, while still King of Aquitaine merely, Lewis had made two briefly successful expeditions in that direction. He had taken Lerida and Huesca, and had defeated the troops of the Emir Zado, Zaddo (Saad?) under the walls of Barcelona, which he then took and returned triumphant.[1]

A.D. 826.

Now, however, the Arabs in their turn came breaking the Christian boundaries, streaming up to the Pyrenees into Gothia, where their leader, Abû-Merwán, united forces with a rebellious Gothic army under a certain Aizo.[2] Skyey prodigies, not unlike those which thirty years ago had affrighted the men of Northumbria, were visible—a phantom army seen fighting in mid-air.[3] Several of the Imperial counts and wardens of the marshes, taken all unprepared, were defeated. The disaster might have been more serious had it not been for Bernard, Count of Gothia, who appears almost for the first time upon the scene on this occasion, but whose life and tragic end were henceforth to be closely linked with the fortunes of the Carling house. No one save Bernard came well out of the business[4] —not Lewis himself, who, unlike the Lewis of earlier days, did not hasten in person to protect his marches and to avenge the insult. 'When the emperor heard the evil tidings he determined to send reinforcements for the defence of the kingdom: *then he continued his hunting in Compiègne.*'[5] Next year at the Placitum held at Aix there were loudly uttered complaints of the conduct of the emperor's officers. They were, however, not punished, 'only deprived of their commands.'[6]

Count Bernard was the son of the famous William, Count of Toulouse, Lewis's old governor, whose memory the popular voice, the voice alike of priests and people, deservedly

[1] Einhard, 801; Anon. *Vita Hl. I.* (Pertz, ii. 611); Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmina*, i. 67–537 (Pertz, ii. 468–477).

[2] Einh. 827; Astron. c. 40, 41.

[3] Astron. c. 41.

[4] Nithard, i. 3.; Einhard, a.a. 827; Astron. *l.c.* Matfrid of Orleans was one of the culpable generals, Hugo *the Timid* another.

[5] Astronomer, c. 41.

[6] Ibid. c. 42.

honoured. Were it only in memory of his father, Bernard might be expected to stand, as he did stand, in high favour at Court. But he was himself a very brilliant personage, who was not only in high favour with Lewis, but, malignant whispers said, in higher favour still with the young empress. To these malignant whispers and to Bernard's many enemies Judith's stepsons soon began to lend their ears; and men said more loudly that young Charles was no brother of theirs, no son of Lewis's, but of Judith's and Count Bernard's [1]—an accusation, be it said, which, as fully as such accusations can be, was disproved in after-years.

Judith's misdeeds were not this; but her restless scheming to carve a portion out of the empire as an inheritance for her own son Charles would have provoked a rebellion in any case. And behind and beyond the question of right between this or that inheritor, behind Judith's maternal ambition and the discontent of her stepsons, there lay a much greater question which these domestic quarrels only served to bring to the front. It was a question of the whole meaning and character of that new Western Empire which had arisen upon the ruins of the old. Was it the indissoluble God-appointed *monarchy*, the seamless garment about which men wrote in after-years, or was it only the inheritance of the Carling House, to be redivided as its possessor might choose? On one side or the other the statesmen and place-hunters of the day began to take their stand.

At length Judith contrived that the *Charta Divisionis* should be so far set aside, that a fresh slice was carved out of the empire as a portion for the child Charles —Alamannia or Swabia.[2] Bernard, who had grown higher and higher in Court favour, was made the regent of Alamannia in the infant's name. At the same time he received the office of High Chamberlain, the highest post at Court; and matters grew ripe for a revolt.[3] **A.D. 829.**

[1] *Vita Walæ* (Ratbert) ii.; Agobard, *Opera*, 367; *cf.* Thegan, c. 36.

[2] Rather more than Alamannia—terram Alamannicam et Redicam et partem aliquam Burgundiæ. Thegan, *o.c.* 35.

[3] Einhard, a.a. 829; *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; Nithard, *o.c.* i. 3 (Pertz, ii. 653).

This was in 829, three years after the Mainz baptism. Next year, by persuasion of Bernard (says one chronicler[1]) Lewis undertook an expedition into Brittany: by persuasion of Bernard, but still more it was thought of a certain traitorous Count Lantbert (Lambert), who falsely represented the Duke of Brittany as meditating a revolt. Lantbert had his own ends to serve; as appeared before long. For now the emperor, who had, strangely enough, summoned his ban in the middle of the Lenten fast[2] found that only a very few of his grandees had obeyed the summons. He began his march, however. On their side the nobles of the West, who had not come when called upon, had been hastening elsewhither to meet Pippin, King of Aquitaine; and he, instead of joining his father upon the borders of Brittany, had marched to Paris. There the standard of revolt was first raised; and Paris took her first lesson in the art of conquering her king. A message came from the elder brother, Lothair, in Italy, that he was on his way to France, to put himself at the head of the malcontents. Lewis's troops were falling away and he could not rely on those that remained. Pippin marched from Paris to Orleans and from Orleans to Verberie.[3] The minister who had abused the confidence of the emperor was arraigned, and anon he and Judith were openly accused of adultery. Bernard fled to his own county.[4] The empress, seeking refuge at Laon, was seized, forced to take the veil, and thrust into a convent at Poictiers; and Lewis was solemnly deprived of the insignia of his power.

A.D. 830.

And now Lothair came from Italy, joined forces with his brother, and took the lead of the revolt. The rebels had missed Count Bernard, but they seized and imprisoned his brother Herebert—according to one authority they put out his eyes; and all that summer Lewis was emperor only in name.[5]

The rebellion was a French one, hatched by the Latin-speaking subjects of the emperor. The Germans had no part in it;

[1] *Annales Bertiani.* a.a. (Pertz, vol. i. p. 423).
[2] *Ann. Mettens.* 830 (P. i. 336); *cf.* Pertz, *Leg.* i. 368.
[3] Nithard, i. 3; *cf.* Palgrave, *Norm. and Engl.* i. 282.
[4] Nithard, *l.c.*
[5] Nithard, *l.c.*

nor had the younger Lewis, the youngest of Irmingard's sons. By him, followed by all the faithful Germans and Saxons, the emperor was presently restored; and at a council held at Nymuegen he seemed to have recovered his former greatness.[1] But next year, while Pippin had stolen away from Court,[2] news came that this same Lewis had broken into Charles's kingdom of Alamannia and was harrying it with fire and sword.[3] Before long all the three sons of Lewis were in revolt together, and we find them lying in that great plain of the Upper Rhine which has been so often the battle-ground between different nationalities and different creeds. The emperor was at Worms, still it seems trusting more to his 'German subjects than to the Franks'; albeit Lewis the German was now upon the side of the rebels.

A.D. 830.

A.D. 831.

A.D. 833.

What is of most significance is that Pope Gregory was also here, having hurried up from Italy, professedly to act the part of a peacemaker between the rival armies,[4] really it is believed tampering with the imperial soldiers in the interests of his immediate lord, Lothair. At last a shameful day arrived —which history still remembers—when we see the Imperial army all drawn up 'in a plain between Basle and Strassburg,'[5] the plain of Colmar, and the rebel army opposite, and when presently the unhappy Lewis finds that his soldiers are deserting to the enemy as fast as their legs will carry them; until at last he is obliged to say, in his kindness of heart, 'Do not stay with me. Do not be the last to desert me, lest you get into trouble with your new masters.' In memory of which scene of treachery the field was called the Field of Lies (Lügenfeld)[6] ever after—*ubi plurimorum fidelitas extincta est*, 'for there died the faith of many a subject.'[7]

This, then, was in the midsummer of A.D. 833. One year

[1] Thegan, 37 (P. ii. 598); Anon. *Vit.* 36.
[2] *An. Bert.* a.a. 832 [831] (P. ii. 424). [3] *An. Bert.* a.a.; Anon. 47.
[4] *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; *Ann. Xant.* a.a.
[5] Thegan, *o.c.* 42 (Pertz, ii. 42); Anon. *Vita.*
[6] Campus mentitus, *Ann. Bert.* (P. i. 426); Campus mendacii, Thegan.
[7] Thegan, *l.c.*

before this, far away in the west, Thorgisl and his great royal fleet had come to Ireland; and the men were engaged in sad ravage of all the holy places there, plundering Rathin, Clondalkin, and the rest. This year, too, Ecgberht in England was summoning his 'Witan' to consult upon the defences of the kingdom. And he was not too soon, for the attack on Sheppey followed two years after. And, as it chanced, following almost immediately upon the scene at the Colmar plain, the northern troubles began once more upon the Continent, as we shall have presently to relate. Nay, we may take this as the epoch of the real effective beginning of the Viking raids in Continental Europe—the first genuine taste of that *furor Normannorum* which was to call forth so many prayers.

III.

The victors used their triumph cruelly; and the Franks could not see without anger and shame their aged emperor dragged as it were behind the car of his son, powerless and alone.[1] For Judith had been sent into a convent far away beyond the Alps—to Tortona—and even the ten-year-old Charles was taken from both his parents and imprisoned in the Abbey of Prüm.[2] Could Lothair have looked down the stream of time, he would have seen himself, grown weary of life's struggles, coming to seek shelter in that same monastery of Prüm for a few short months on the way from his throne to the grave. But at this moment no shadow of the future overcast his fortune.[3] His thoughts were how he could by force or persuasion make his father take this very step of resignation, and retire into a monastery as he had wished to do after the death of Irmingard. Then all would be well. Ebbo, the ungrateful Ebbo, who owed all his elevation to his foster-brother the emperor, called together an ecclesiastical council and solemnly pronounced the deposition of Lewis the Pious.[4]

[1] *Ann. Bert.* (P. i. 427). [2] Thegan, *o.c.* 42; Astron. 48.

[3] Lothair styles himself *Rex in orientali Francia* from A.D. 833 onwards. The portions of the empire obtained by Lewis and Pippin are sufficiently indicated in *Ann. Bert.* 834 (P. i. 427).

[4] Thegan, c. 44; *Ann. Bert.* s.a.

Christendom cried out at these indignities offered to its head, and the Pope himself was ashamed of the part which he had played.[1] Nor were the brothers of Lothair well content to see that all the profits of rebellion fell to him. Lothair was now emperor, receiving ambassadors from far and near, from the Slavonic provinces, from the Greek emperor. Some, no doubt, had set out while Lewis was still upon the throne.[2]

There was no principle of policy governing the different parties in these revolts—each was for himself, and chaos seemed come again; wherefore it has not been necessary for us to follow in detail the early years of this civil war. But let us note one saving feature through it all, the extreme reluctance on either side to shed Christian blood. One little spurt of actual battle (the first in this contest) marks the proceedings of the next year, when Pippin and Lewis of Germany were once more ranged upon the side of their father and Lothair was once more deposed.[3] A.D. 834.

He retired into Italy with the leaders of his party, Matfrid, Count of Orleans, and Wala, the Abbot, once of Corbie, now of Bobbio.[4] Even there he did not feel himself secure, but set to work to fortify the passes of the Alps. A.D. 835.

Heaven itself seemed to pronounce his guilt. He was prostrated by a dangerous fever.[5] We shall see how many times the pestilential air of Italy revenged itself upon the descendants of her conqueror, Charlemagne. It was noted how many of Lothair's trusted counsellors—or, as the imperial party would have said, chief authors of all the troubles of the realm—fell ill at the same time. Some died, A.D. 836.

[1] Astron. 48; Nithard, i. c. 4. Not unimpeachable authorities certainly on such a point. But see Dümmler, *Gesch. d. Ostf. R.* i. p. 83, *note*.

[2] *Ann. Bert.*; Astron. 49.

[3] *Ann. Bert.* (P. i. 428); Nithard (P. ii. 653); Anon. 52; Thegan, 52-55. It was really little more than a skirmish, though Nithard speaks of an 'innumerable multitude' as having fallen.

[4] Agobard of Lyons and Ebbo of Rheims were deprived of their sees in A.D. 835 (Anon. *Vita*. c. 54; *Bert.* s.a. 835).

[5] Thegan, add. (P. ii. 603).

as did Wala and Matfrid.[1] The one was the greatest statesman, the other the most distinguished general, in the party of Lothair.

A.D. 837. The emperor would doubtless have pursued his son still farther, but, by a strange coincidence, the Vikings stepped in in the North and obliged Lewis the Pious to pause in his march towards Italy. For the last three years the Danes had been harrying in Frisia.[2] This year they fell with great fury upon Walcheren Island and on Dorstad—that rich and tempting town—plundered it, and burnt a great part.[3] Lewis was compelled to abandon his Italian expedition and to collect troops to defend the north. He himself hurried up to Nymuegen, whence he could see the fires of the Danish devastation.[4] But the Vikings had not yet grown so bold as to hazard an engagement with the emperor in person; and as Lewis advanced they retreated, returned to their ships, and sailed away in safety. But they had saved the fate of Lothair.

IV.

For those who chiefly governed the policy of Lewis, Judith, the empress, most of all, had objects more near at heart than the difficult and profitless task of crushing the King of Italy.[5] The provisions of the *Charta Divisionis* had been long ago set aside with the consent even of the majority of the first fomentors of the rebellion made for its maintenance; and at every fresh return of the elder Lewis to power the portion of Charles the Bald in the empire was increased. Pippin was presently induced to consent to the endowment of

A.D. 838. Charles with a portion of Neustria.[6] At the same time his father, the emperor, girt Charles with a sword, in token of his having arrived at manhood (he was

[1] Thegan, 55; Lantbert and Hugo d. 837; *Ann. F.*

[2] The burnt Antwerp and 'Witla' on the Meuse; *A. Fuld.* and *A. Xant.* 835–6.

[3] *Ann. Bert.*; *Fuld.*; *Xant.* 837.

[4] Astron. 836; Thegan, add. (Pertz, ii. 604).

[5] *Cf. Ann. Bert.* a.a. 836.

[6] Nithard, 6 (P. ii. 653–4), where is given in exact detail the territory assigned to Charles.

now fifteen), and he himself placed a crown upon Charles's head.[1]

But Lewis and Lothair had been no parties to this arrangement, and next year there were rumours of a meeting between the two brothers in the Alpine passes.[2] Before long Lewis was openly in arms once more. He probably looked for the support of his brother, but it never came; so he had to give way, and see himself robbed of Saxony, which for some time past had formed a portion of his German kingdom, and which Charles now received in addition to the fairest portions of Francia—the 'douce France' of the *Chansons de Geste*. And these arrangements had scarcely been completed when Pippin of Aquitaine, the second son of the emperor, died.[3] He left behind him a son of the same name, beautiful, wild, and fearless, not only the natural successor to his father, but a natural king among the people of the country where his father had ruled—*ipsis Hibernis Hibernior*—more quick, more turbulent and brave, than the Aquitanians themselves. Nevertheless, Lewis the emperor refused to ratify Pippin's claim—he was not fit, he said, to rule; and young Charles, still scarcely seventeen, not more than one year older than this second Pippin, had Aquitaine added to his vast domains.

At this new injustice Lewis the German rose once more in loud, active resistance and complaint. He, shorn of half his power, was to see his young brother with such a Benjamin portion of two kingdoms. It was not safe to have both the surviving sons of Irmingard for enemies, and Judith cast about, to see to which she should make advances. Lothair's natural ties were all to his brother Lewis. He had, too, done Judith, as a mother and as a wife, all the injuries which a man could inflict upon a woman. But the natural bonds neither of love nor of resentment interfered with the policy which brought these two into alliance. The emperor was visibly failing; his lungs were gravely affected.

A.D. 839.

[1] Nithard, *l.c.* [2] *Ann. Bert.*; *Ann. Fuld.* 838 (Trent).

[3] Nithard, i. 8; *Ann. Fuld.* a.a. (Nov.); *Ann. Bert.* (Dec.); Anon. *Vita* (Jan., 839). The correct date is December.

But his name and his character still commanded a respect which none of his successors could count upon. Still, moreover, it was deemed legitimate for the emperor to alter the succession by will. No law, or even strict custom, prevented him from passing over his eldest son. If but once Lothair's title and succession were assured beyond all cavil, he could, no doubt, dispose soon enough of the claims of his upstart brother. So he argued probably. Judith, on her side, knew that at her son Charles's age all thought of a nomination as heir of the empire was out of the question; and, foreseeing, as she might well do, the approaching death of her husband, she may have hoped against hope that she could secure for Charles the friendship and protection of his successor. So once more a distribution of lands took place. Lothair's portion was fixed for Italy, with the imperial title, for Provence, the best part of Germany, the Frisian and a part of the Belgian provinces. To Charles was left Neustria and Aquitaine, a territory almost as large as modern France, the brightest and most cultured part of Northern Europe.[1]

A.D. 840. As might have been expected when the news of this last partition was made known, both sides of the empire sprang into rebellion.[2] Aquitaine would not abandon her prince; and Lewis the Younger summoned his German troops, and determined to try the fortune of war before he would submit to such a spoliation. His father, Lewis, feeble as he was, prepared on his side to buckle on his armour. He turned first to Aquitaine, which he soon reduced to an apparent submission; then—weighed down though he was with trouble and disease, if not with years—he traversed with unexampled celerity the whole breadth of Frankland to come to the encounter with Lewis. The emperor could hardly be accounted old; he was not more than sixty-two. But his spirit was broken. It had long left the world. Better had it been for all if he had retired from it wholly after the death of Irmihgard; for nothing but evil had resulted from the second marriage.

[1] Nithard, 7; *Ann. Bert.* a. 839. [2] Nithard, 8.

Musing sad thoughts like these, snatching long hours for prayer and penance which were due to rest, stung in his tenderest human affections by the undutifulness of his children, and wounded on the spiritual side by the treachery of many among the ecclesiastics whom he had delighted to honour, what tie now bound the emperor to life? Could even his conscience acquit him, enslaved as he had become to the ambition of Judith and to an unjust and exclusive tenderness for his youngest son? If young Lewis, the most honest and hitherto the most faithful of all his sons, were in arms, did the fault lie chiefly at his door? But still Louis the Pious was the son of Charlemagne; and though some of these thoughts must have sat heavily upon him, he did not pause in his advance, nor relax in his efforts to assemble an army large enough to crush the hopes of Lewis the German; and when the full imperial power was put forth, treason could still only peep to what it would. So soon, therefore, as he saw his father approaching, Lewis the German retreated farther eastward into the Slavonian marches, where he was practically unreachable, and lay there in wait for better days.

The emperor, on his side, stayed his advance. He had already crossed the Rhine; and he now paused by one of those trans-Rhenine fortresses which owed their origin to the conquests of his father and grandfather, and were among the most speaking memorials of the activity and achievements of the early Carling princes. This one was at a passage of the Maine called, from some circumstance now forgotten, the Franks' ford—Frankfurt. From being a military outpost, a march between heathen and Christian lands, it had now grown to be the seat of an imperial palace as well as a central market for these districts, and was destined to become one of the great marts of the world. At this place Lewis was attacked by an acute access of his consumption; he could take no nourishment, and soon appeared to be rapidly sinking. He made a backward movement to the Rhine, which he had not long left; and as the summer season was just coming on, he ordered a shelter to be erected for him upon one of the islands which the

stream makes in its rapid course after it has been swollen with the waters of the Neckar and the Maine, just where it leaves the sunny Rheingau to plunge into its narrower channel lower down—that island familiar enough to the modern tourist as the Pfalz Insel, where another imperial Lewis, Lewis of Bavaria, some five hundred years later, built the castle from which it takes its name. Here Lewis might see the storks flying northwards to their summer homes, the crane and the bittern fishing in the pools, the hawks hovering above the woods which darkened the banks on either side, and beside all listen to the constant murmur of the rushing stream. It was the season when in former years he would have been hunting in woods like these, near familiar Ingelheim or pleasant Compiègne. Now all this was passed. There was but a little time left now to make his peace with Heaven and leave his last injunctions for the ordering of his earthly kingdom. His thoughts still dwelt upon the welfare of Charles, his Benjamin, and he commended him—an evil choice—to the protection of Lothair. Trust not to this Reuben, oh Benjamin: trust rather to thine own valour and the counsels of thine undaunted mother, Judith of Altdorf!

And on this pfalz island, upon a Sunday morning, the midsummer eve[1] of the year 840, surrounded by some of his favourite ecclesiastics, '*muni*,' 'fortified,' as the Roman Catholics say, with the last sacrament of the Church, died Lewis the Pious, the third kingly Carlovingian—

Rex Hludovicus, pietatis tantus amicus
Quod pius a populo, dictur et titulo.

V.

With the death of Lewis died the Carling Empire, after its short life of forty years, during the last ten of which it, like its representative, had been already stricken by a fatal disease. The spirit of dominion, the stable source of all power, which had rested upon the helmet of the Pippins and Charleses of old days, and seemed to follow in the course of the House of

[1] *Ann. B.*; *Fuld.*; Nithard, June 28; *cf.* Palgrave, *o.c.* i. 308–9.

Heristal, shook its wings and fled from their descendants never to return. The majesty of the Frankish name vanished too. The German races—the barbarians—who had so often sided with the emperor when the Franks were united to oppose him, and had by their seried phalanxes overawed their former masters, felt themselves free. Now that Lewis was dead, they were a ready prize to any one who chose to take them in his hand.

And the younger Lewis who had so long been king of Bavaria, and had identified himself with German thought and ways, and who for a short time had been in the full sense a king of the German nationalities, was ready to do this.

At the moment he appeared to be subdued. Lothair, who had outwitted his brother by suddenly changing sides and gaining favour with the emperor, seemed to reap the fruits of this timely subservience by the undoubted title he possessed to the empire, to Italy, and to all the lands between Bavaria (which alone remained to Lewis) and Neustria and Aquitaine, which formed the kingdom of Charles. Lothair was at this moment forty-five. He had passed beyond the age when men are likely to display unsuspected qualities; and he had hitherto shown neither wisdom nor honesty. Craft was his favourite weapon. He had been skilled in the use of it by some of his worst advisers: by Count Matfrid and by his father-in-law, Hugo, that timid count who plotted for fear of counter-plots. We may allow Lothair personal courage, but in moral courage and resolution and constancy he was almost wholly lacking. In his youth he had been credited with pious and studious tendencies, and it was chiefly on account of these promising dispositions that he was so early chosen to share with his father the title of Augustus, a title which he had enjoyed since his twenty-third year.

The next surviving brother was Lewis. He was nine years younger than Lothair, and therefore now thirty-six. He, like Lothair, had been, or been supposed to be, pious and studious in early years; whereas the middle one, Pippin, was given to wild courses, and even, it is said, to the bottle, in which respects

he was followed by *his* son, Pippin, the present pretender to Aquitaine. Stories are told to illustrate the extraordinary precociousness and *aplomb* of the younger Lewis, which may or may not be true.[1] One cannot say that he was more or less rebellious than his two brothers—who all, it must be owned, had excuse for rebellion. But among his own subjects, more especially among his original ones, the Bavarians, he was a wise and successful ruler; his success is witnessed by the unswerving attachment of this people to him through good and evil fortune; and he was himself of an undaunted and constant spirit.

Charles, the half-brother, was as yet only seventeen, his character scarcely formed. History has generally been severe upon his memory. But surely our sympathies cannot be wanting for the unhappy youth, surrounded by so many enemies, destined to such hard struggles through all the years of his long reign, and never (despite his many weaknesses and many failures) wholly giving way and despairing of the republic. The fourth of these four spirits of discord was the younger Pippin, whom a great part of the Aquitaine nobility, all the people of South Aquitaine, still acknowledged as their rightful king, though Aquitaine was counted among the dominions of Charles the Bald.

The master-stroke in Judith's policy before the death of her husband lay in the fact that she had contrived to hand over to Lothair the lands which had been taken from Lewis, instead of leaving them with her own son Charles. Had Lothair been secure of his position he would have cared little about the struggle between his younger brothers, except, it may be, to wait until they had weakened each other, and then, if possible, step in and take all he could from both; and if Lewis and Charles had been left face to face the former would have made quick work of the latter. Still, so obvious seemed the motives which urged the two sons of Irmingard to an alliance, that to a dispassionate onlooker Charles's most probable destiny would have seemed a short shrift, or at least an

[1] Mon. Sangall, ii. c. 10.

early deposition. It was Lothair's arrogance and Lewis's self-seeking which saved him. Lothair was in Italy when the old emperor died; Lewis, as we have seen, had been driven into Bavaria.[1] Before his elder brother had time to cross the Alps and arrive in the middle kingdom, Lewis had once more collected his troops, had entered Alamannia and laid siege to Worms; and thence, leaving the besieging army in the charge of his generals, had crossed into Saxony to gain the adherence of that nation. Meanwhile Lothair appeared north of the Alps, and made a triumphant progress through the middle kingdom to Aix, where he received the homage of most of the most distinguished of his father's vassals. They had no reason for withholding this homage; for had not Lothair been designated by Lewis as his successor, and had not all the middle kingdom, including Frisia on one side, and most of Provence with Burgundy upon the other, been set apart for him? Thus we find, among other of the faithful followers of Lewis the Emperor, his half-brother Drogo of Mainz doing homage to the eldest son; and Hildwin too readily came over to the party of Lothair when he made his appearance west of the Meuse.[2] Lothair was so overjoyed at the ovation he received that he scarcely concealed his claims to pre-eminence over his brothers.

And now followed a tedious period of marching and counter-marching and of endless negotiations, which, however, have a significance of their own. In all this long rivalry since 830, a state of things which was really civil war, there had been scarcely any blood yet shed. One engagement in which Count Odo of Orleans had fallen under the attack of Lothair's adherents, the brave and successful Lambert and Matfrid, was about the only bloodshed which these ten long years of strife had to acknowledge. I do not therefore suppose that it was due to mere personal timidity on the part of Lothair that, when he found himself drawn up in battle array, now opposite Lewis on the Rhine, now opposite Charles by the Loire, he put off the dreadful arbitrement of

[1] Nithard, ii. 1 (P. ii. 655). [2] Nithard, ii. 3.

blood, and on each occasion made a temporary truce. It was not want of personal courage, I imagine; but it was certainly want of resolution and foresight. Lothair hoped, no doubt, that the sight of his own pre-eminent position would draw away from Lewis and Charles their few adherents, and that with a bloodless victory the full imperial power which his father had swayed would soon be his.[1] He did not (and this is the hardest thing in the world to do) reckon with the change of the times. He did not see how far the different portions of the empire had drifted apart during these last ten years of struggle; how hateful to the Germans was the supremacy of the Franks; how little love of unity there reigned in any part of the empire. Everywhere had sprung up the demand for home rule. Half of the Aquitanians would, if they could, have their own king Pippin; but they would rather be joined with Neustria than with the whole heterogeneous empire which Lewis the Pious had governed. So the forces which Lothair deemed would be working for him were in reality making fatally against his hopes.

Meantime he was hesitating. He turned first to Germany, and came face to face with Lewis's army, a force far inferior to his own. But he did not strike quickly and strike hard; rather he preferred a truce for six months; and then he turned westward towards Neustria.[2] Thereupon all Charles's kingdom north of the Loire seemed to fall from him. In the south of Aquitaine, too, he had his nephew Pippin in arms. His case seemed hopeless. But Charles would not resign without a struggle; and, collecting such an army as he could, he marched against Lothair, and met him near Orleans.[3] Again, however, the emperor shunned the shock of battle; and a six months' truce was made with Charles. Back again therefore to Lewis, who had now fortified himself upon the Rhine; while Charles, as the way was left open, or only defended by a guard which Lothair had left, crossed the Seine, rolled back Lothair's army of observation, and marched

[1] *Cf.* Nithard, ii. 4 and 7.

[2] Nithard, ii. 1.

[3] Id. ii. 4.

over the Maas into Lothair's own territory.[1] The young emperor meantime had made his way across the Rhine, had gained over the most of the adherents of Lewis, who, in his turn, was obliged to retire far back to the eastern limit of his Bavarian kingdom.

Lothair had still the game in his own hands, and he had not yet fought a single battle; but instead of advancing to crush his youngest brother he spent his time in Easter festivities and general rejoicings at Aix, safe in the middle of his own imperial territories. Meantime Charles was making way. Most of the Frankish nobles had again changed sides and come over to him; he had advanced his army as far as Attigny, and at the same time Judith was hurrying up with another army which she had gathered in Aquitaine. Just as Lothair had finally made up his mind to attack Charles, and the latter had made a sort of backward movement to join his mother, news came that Lewis had gathered fresh forces and had marched out of Bavaria.[2] Lothair had left an army to hold Swabia and to protect the Rhine, but Lewis drove it before him, and in a battle in Riesgau (May, 841), broke it in pieces, and pushed on across the river. Lothair had no time to interpose. At length (June, 841) Lewis and Charles effected a junction at Châlons sur Marne. Lothair was not far off near the Loire.

It was a tremendous moment. All the forces of the empire were marshalled upon one side or the other. For Pippin was on his way from Aquitaine with a contingent to the army of Lothair. Had at last the long years of disturbance come to this, that Christians and subjects of the same empire were about to fly at each other's throats in a death-wrestle? Lewis and Charles could not quite persuade themselves that there was no alternative. As their father had always done, even when in overwhelming superiority, they had recourse first to peaceful negotiations. They offered to make an equitable partition of the countries north of the Alps into three portions, and Lothair, when the partition was made, was

A.D. 841.

[1] Nithard, ii. 6.

[2] Id. ii. 9.

to choose his own share. He would, in addition, have had Italy, which had always been his kingdom. As the event proved it was no unfair offer. But now it was Lothair who refused all overtures of peace. To him it seemed that he could easily break the power of his brothers. Nevertheless he lengthened out the *pourparlers* to give time for the arrival of young Pippin, who was marching from Aquitaine.[1] And negotiations were still proceeding when Lothair heard of the approach of his ally; whereupon he suddenly broke up his camp and fell a day's march to the rear towards the Loire, and thither his brothers followed him with what speed they might. They encamped at Tury,[2] near Auxerre. Truth to tell, Lewis's rapid march from the Rhine to Châlons had almost worn out his infantry.

The place where the brothers finally found Lothair encamped was in that pleasant undulating country just where the higher land of the Côte d'Or slopes away toward the great central plain of France. It is the modern department of Yonne, a region well shut in on three sides by rivers; for on the north is the Seine, and on the south the Loire; on the east is the Yonne, which empties its waters into the Seine. The country is all divided up into little valleys, every one of which has its own stream flowing to swell the waters of one or other of the larger rivers. Hence there are a great number of places in the neighbourhood called Fontaines, Fontenoy, Fontenay, Fontenailles: one of which was now to gain its niche in history. Very famous is this field of Fontenailles, or Fontenoy,[3] in the annals of European history; far more so than that modern battle-place, the Fontenoy in Belgium, where we got our beating at the hands of Marshal Saxe. Upon the high road between Cogne and Yoigny, a little after you have passed Saint Sauveur, you mount the hill of Fontaines, and there opposite you stands Fontenoy, standing pleasantly among its woods and farms and orchards—in those days no doubt its woods were much thicker than they

[1] Nithard, ii. 10. [2] 'Tauriacus.' Ibid.
[3] 'Fontaneum.' Ibid.

are now. The stream which runs through the valley, which before the summer sundown of the 25th of June, 841, was to run red enough, swells the waters of the Ouanne, a tributary of the Yonne.

Battles in those days, when strategy was considered a sort of knavery, often partook of the honourable character of the duel. It was more especially appropriate that this one should do so, because it was fought between kinsmen and nations of the same religion, the same civilization and government. Wherefore the previous day Lewis and Charles had sent a solemn defiance to Lothair; and this field of Fontenoy had been fixed upon as the field of battle.

It was very early on the morning of the 25th of June, 841, that the two allied armies left their positions. Lewis and Charles came from Tury, where their camp stood. They took stand with one wing upon the brow of the hill, but with the great body of their army in the valley. In the latter portion stood nearly all the troops of Charles's command, the western Franks, namely, from the Maas to the Loire, and the northern Aquitanians. Here the allied brothers made a halt till eight o'clock, allowing this one more brief moment to hopes of peace. But Lothair had no thoughts of peace. He, in his turn, came advancing along the hill to engage the troops of Lewis, while his nephew Pippin marched up the valley against those of Charles. Now that the time for hesitation was over Lothair displayed the spirit of his ancestors. 'Had there been ten men as good as he in the united army' it would not have given way. But the great stress of battle lay between Charles and Pippin, more especially upon the extreme wing of Charles's army which was commanded by Count Adalhard. Here Frenchmen and the men of northern Aquitaine fought against the southern Aquitanians and Gascons. And here the slaughter was terrible. The greater part of the nobility of Aquitaine perished in this battle. Finally, amid the awful carnage, first Pippin's army from the valley, then Lothair and his army from the height, were pushed back and back till they broke and rolled away in hopeless flight.

Lewis and Charles did not pursue, 'wishing to spare Christian blood'; perhaps also because their soldiers were too fatigued after their midsummer-day's work. And the two brothers spent the next day, Sunday, collecting the dead, singing their *Te Deums* too, perhaps, if they had the heart to do so. But it was no occasion for triumph. On that field, for the first time, two great armies drawn from the subjects of the new Western Empire met in civil combat. In Lewis's troubles with his sons there had been no single great engagement. Christians shrank from drawing the blood of Christians, subjects of the empire, the blood of fellow-subjects. But here this feeling was laid aside.

No wonder then that men looked back to that day with a superstitious horror, as to a sort of foreshadowing of Doomsday; that they told fabulous stories of the number of the slain, that they called down curses on its memory [1]—

Maledicta dies illa nec in anni circulis
Numeretur, sed radatur ab omni memoria.
Jubar solis illi desit, aurora crepusculo.

This battle decided the fate of the empire. For two years more Lothair used every endeavour to recover the ground which he had lost, to raise once more an imperial party in the state.[2] But in vain. Then followed (August, 843) the treaty of Verdun between Lothair, Lewis, and Charles from the date of which the history of mediæval Europe may be said to begin. That treaty gave to Lothair in north Europe the long stretch of territory from the German Ocean to the Alps, which afterwards took from his son the name of the kingdom of Lotharingia, Provence, and Burgundy. Lewis had all the Christian lands eastward—Saxony,

A.D. 843.

[1] 'Never in our time has there been such a slaughter of Franks' (*Ann. Fuld.* 841).

[2] The celebrated 'oath of Strassburg,' in which Lewis and Charles swore fidelity to one another each in the other's language, and their soldiers followed suit, belongs to this period, and is the earliest monument of popular French and popular German [*i.e.*, Deutsch, which *is* the people's language] which we possess (Nithard, iii. 5).

Thuringia, Franconia (East Francia), Alamannia, Bavaria: his was the task of guarding his frontiers against the endless flood of Slavonic barbarians in the East. Charles had France proper from the Meuse to the Loire, Aquitaine, Gothia: his to subdue, if he could, rebellious Aquitaine, and master the province of Gothia, where, during these years of struggle, Count Bernard—the same Count Bernard of old days—had been forming for himself an independent power: his the task of making, if he could, Brittany once more an integral portion of his kingdom. But beyond this another work lay ahead for Lothair and Charles—for those two especially: the task and means of guarding their sea-coasts against the fleets of the Northmen, whom we may be sure had not watched with indifference the new troubles which were growing round the empire from day to day.

CHAPTER IX.

RAIDS IN THE FRANKISH EMPIRE.

A.D. 834–845.

I.

THE outbreak of the civil war in the Frankish Empire which lasted eleven years from Pippin's first rising to the battle of Fontenoy, was a signal of hope no doubt to all the enemies of the Franks, to all on whom their rule pressed heavily, or who felt the danger of their advance. In marshy Frisia and mountainous Brittany, in the Gascon lands bordering the Pyrenees, or where Count Bernard was trying to raise himself a separate state in Gothia, by the shores of the Mediterranean and by the shores of the Baltic, the clang of arms in that fratricidal conflict was as a call to try one more stroke for independence or conquest. And not the least was it this to the champions of heathendom who had for many years watched with increasing dread the growth of the Carling Empire. It was seventy years since Charlemagne's Franks first woke the echoes in the Saxon forests, nearly sixty since Widukind had had to come in and be baptized; and Siegfred, his protector, might say, 'Now my turn will come.' It was thirty years since the bolder Godfred had hurled his fleet upon the Frisian coast and gathered an army which he designed should meet the hosts of Charlemagne. Now at last the tide of Frankish conquest, which had advanced so far, seemed to have fairly begun to roll back.

Amid the hurly of the suicidal war within the empire all anti-Christian forces appeared to rise to fresh life. **A.D. 841.** Who would have dreamed that there still lay a strong heathen party in Saxony, the land which had been so faithful to the pious Lewis, on which his wife Judith seemed to have special claims? Yet such was the case. The party called itself the party of the *Stellinga*, or Sticklers—sticklers for old observances, old methods of land tenure more especially.[1] The Frankish conquest had introduced Frankish customs into Saxony, and with them a new territorial nobility founded on a principle analogous to the mediæval one of vassalage, or containing, let us say, the germ of that principle. It was principally of the Frankish system of land tenure that the feudality of the Middle Ages was the outgrowth.[2] And the introduction of that system into Saxony was the destruction, or leastways the menace, of the free allodial tenure which till then obtained. No wonder, therefore, that there was the party of Sticklers who were also the party of the *Frilingi*, or free-holders, and of the peasants (*lazzi*), opposed to the adel, the *Edhelingi* (nobles) who held their land on Frankish principles.

The adel were naturally favourable to the Frankish rule, and Lewis the German's hold upon Saxony rested mainly upon their support. This was reason enough to Lothair—now, when he was seeking to escape the consequences of the defeat at Fontenoy—for allying himself with the Stellinga, the enemies of his race and of his creed. But it gave a deep scandal to Christianity to see the emperor himself, the head of the whole Christian Commonwealth, on terms with those backsliders.

[1] Nithard, iv. 2 *sq.* (Pertz, ii. 668); *Ann. Xant.* a. 841 (P. ii. 227). It is the former of these only who dwells much on the fear of a return to heathenism in Saxony. *Cf. Ann. Bert.* (Prudentius) a.a. 841 (Pertz, i. 437–8) and Vita S. Lebuini (P. ii. 361).

[2] According to Fustel de Coulange, in his latest work *L'Alleu*, the Frankish land system, which was eventually the feudal, *manorial* system, was inherited from the Romans.

See also Dahn, *Deutsche Gesch.* ii. 124–5, on decay of yeoman class among Germans under the Carlings and rise of nobility by service—*comites*. The same process went on in England after the Viking era.

They gave much trouble to Lewis the German in after-years before they were finally brought under.[1]

It was Lothair's fate to enlist upon his side the enemies or doubtful friends of Christianity. He counted among his vassals that same Harald whose baptism at Mainz fifteen years ago we witnessed. Harald was Count of Rustringia and Dorstad, and, through his territorial possessions, a natural vassal of Lothair. But his Christianity had been growing of late years a more and more doubtful quantity. We see him in the army of Lothair engaged with others to defend the passes of the Rhine against Lewis the German, but doing so so faintly that suspicions were entertained of his fidelity. Nevertheless Lothair trusted him and added to his fiefs by granting him the peninsula of Walcheren—it was a peninsula, not an island, in those days. 'This gift,' says a contemporary, 'was a deed worthy of execration; whereby the persecutors of the Christian faith became the masters of Christians, and the people of Christ served those who worshipped demons.'[2]

And if in this wise even within the borders of the empire the realm of Christendom seemed to be shrinking, how much higher were the hopes and bolder the wishes of those who had never been counted within it, and had never yet bowed their necks to the hateful dominion of the Franks! With little knowledge as yet, but with much fear and hate and greed, the Northmen of the Baltic began to pour into the regions further south, into that unknown territory which to the Northmen generally was simply 'foreign land' (*Valland*) or to many was still part of the vast Roman Empire, *Romariki*, *Romberg*.

Only a few, a very few hardy mariners had explored its coasts. Godfred had hurled his fleet against Friesland. There is some sign of another fleet in very early days making through the English Channel and round as far as Aquitaine.[3] Then there was that fleet which in Lewis the Pious' day first attacked Frisia, afterwards the Seine mouth,

[1] *Fulda*, a. 842 (Pertz, i. 363); *Xant. l.c.*; *Bert.* 842.
[2] *Ann. Bert.* a.a. 841; *cf.* Nith. *l.c.*
[3] Ante, p. 134, note [1].

and finally plundered a little town upon the Aquitaine coast.[1] This is all that before the outbreak of the civil war had been attempted against Valland itself.

Round the islands of the North Sea, round Great Britain and Ireland, round the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Hebrides and the Faroes there dwelt not the same mysterious dread. On them the Viking fury had already burst. But from the Continent itself the wave had passed away. Here in the empire of Lewis men had too much to think of to turn their eyes to far away Ireland. No doubt monks and priests began to come thence to France, and they had stories to tell of what the *furor Normannorum* was like. But at home all was yet safe, and it is easy to forget troubles which have never yet found you at home.

That one abortive—or almost abortive—attack (in 820) on Frisia, on the Seine lands, and finally on the Aquitaine coast—it was a matter not worth thinking of, nothing side by side with the glorious conversion of Harald and the interposition of the emperor in the Danish civil war. And then there were the missionary efforts—Anscar's famous journey almost to the ends of the earth, and the building of a church there on Birca Island. This mission to Sweden had taken place, by the way, in the same year as Pippin's first rising. Since then Anscar had returned to Germany and been raised high among the ecclesiastics in the Saxon country, first as Bishop of Verden, afterwards of Hamburg. To him had been entrusted the care of all the Northern missions, to the Danes, to the Swedes, to the Slavs—which he held conjointly with the famous Ebbo of Rheims. Now, in the days when the Franks were having civil war in their own country, the Danes had ended theirs. Out of all their slaughterings Horik had survived as the representative of Charlemagne's old enemy Godfred, and reigned at Schleswick no longer with any fear of the Franks upon his borders. And Danish ships no doubt had already grown familiar with the way to the coast of Frisia and to the mouth of the Rhine, and up the Rhine to the

A.D. 820.

[1] P. 208.

rich Dorstad, which was part of Harald's fief, where the produce of the looms of Flanders was spread out to view, and wine may be from the vine-lands higher up the river, where the proud churches invited men to prayer, and displayed their costly shrines inviting to other thoughts as well.

To the market-places of Dorstad, or along the banks of the Rhine spread the news of the rising of one part of the empire against another part, of the sons against their father, finally of the shame of Lügenfeld, where died the faith of many a Frank.

A.D. 834. It was one year after Lügenfeld, in the early autumn of 834, that men beheld a fleet of Viking ships—not Danish merchants these—which steered for the country of the Rhine mouths. They came up one branch to Utrecht, Willibrord's old see, and this they plundered, and up another branch to Dorstad, which they plundered likewise.[1] Dorstad, as we know, was Harald's town, and Harald was still a vassal of the empire, and professedly a Christian: wherefore we might call this expedition the last wave of the Danish civil war, or the first of Viking invasion. We cannot tell whether it was directed most against the empire or against Harald the rival of King Horik. But the Christians were the sufferers in any case. 'From this time the empire weakened and the misery of the people increased from day to day.'

A.D. 835–6–7. The next year, and the next, and the next, the pirates revisited the same territories, plundering and burning, carrying off men and women, and making the Frisians pay them tribute.[2] They came up the Scheld to Antwerp and burnt that town as they had burned Dorstad. The heavens sent dreadful warnings like to those fiery shapes which had foretold the first onset of the Vikings in Northumbria forty

[1] *Ann. Xant.* a.a. 834 (Pertz, ii. 226); *Ann. Fuldenses*, a.a. 835 (Pertz, i. 360); *Ann. Bert.* a.a. 834 (Pertz, i. 428).

[2] *Ann. Xant.* 835–6–7; *Ann. Fuld.* 835–839; *Ann. Bert.* 834 (Prudentius), 836, 838. The people of Cologne were so incensed at the report of these outrages that, in 836, they massacred some envoys of Horik, the king of Jutland, who happened to be in the city; *Ann. Colon.* (P. i. 97). Munch misdates this event in 830, *N. F. H.* ii. 395. See next note.

years ago. At last the cry of the people brought Lewis to the north. He had been preparing to make an expedition into Italy to depose Lothair—as we saw. He had to give up this intention, to march up to Nymuegen, and drive the Northmen for a moment from the prey on which they were fastening. He saw the red fires of their ravages; but they did not stay his approach. All he could do was to hold a council at Nymuegen and consult about the means for defending these territories.

Neither Lewis and his Franks upon the one side, nor the Northmen themselves upon the other, knew the dreadful prophecy contained in these early raids. They could not see all that lay in the womb of Fate. England, as I surmise, had as yet been attacked only by Vikings from Ireland, whose operations lay outside the sphere of Continental politics. [I surmise that the attacks on this country up to the battle of Hengstone, in 838, or perhaps a year or two later, came from Ireland.]

Nevertheless, in 834, what is this that men descry off the island of Herio, or Noirmoutiers, just south of the mouth of the Loire? Noirmoutiers was an island or a peninsula just like Lindisfarne, not less suited than it had been to form the *point d'appui* for Norman attacks upon the mainland. Like Lindisfarne it was connected with the coast by a tongue of land which was covered and laid bare twice daily. It had its abbey, not so famous, indeed, as the English one, but rich and prosperous. Thither was Wala banished, after the suppression of Pippin's first rising against Lewis the Pious. Wala was banished to Noirmoutiers in 831. In 834, through fear of Norman onset—some fleet it must be supposed descried out at sea—the monks of Noirmoutiers got leave to dig up the remains of their founder, St. Philibert, and transport them inland. Next year the fleet was there again, and, strange to say, it was upon St. Philibert's day, August 20, 835, that an engagement took place between this fresh crew of Vikings on the one side and the warden of the coast at this point, Count Rainald of Herbauge.[1] In this first

A.D. 835.

[1] Ademar, *Chron. Aquit.* 830–1 (P. ii. 252), Ermentarius, *Trans. S. Ph.*

recorded battle against the Danes upon the coast of France the Count was defeated; thereupon Noirmoutier monastery was plundered and many of the monks were slain.[1] This was the only Viking expedition which in the latter years of Lewis the Pious's reign passed beyond the English Channel.

Meantime the Danes had been growing at home in Frisia, and, may we not believe, learning to improve their art of navigation under the inspiration of the Frisian merchants and mariners, who had long been acquainted with the perils of the North Sea. And it was, maybe, due to such improvement that we find them, in 840 and the following year crossing over to the opposite coast of England, to the 'marsh country,' as the chronicle says,[2] that is to say to the south of Lincoln or the north of East Anglia. They slipped up the Wash and made their way into the great inland lagoons which lay between East Anglia and Mercia. Here they slew Ealdorman Hereberht. They ravaged in Lindsay and in East Anglia and southwards in the coast of Kent.[3] A wholly new experience for the Danes if, as is possible, this was the first expedition which came hither from the East—the first expedition, that is to say, since those very early ones which took place before the ninth century began. Those who came southward found Egberht no longer governing the kingdoms of Wessex and Kent, but his son Ethelwulf, who succeeded in 838 or 839, a prince whom historians have been wont to speak of as a weak king succeeding a famous sire, much what Lewis the Pious was compared with *his* father, Charlemagne. There is perhaps little ground for this inference.[4] Still one cannot but feel that some of the events of Ethelwulf's

A.D. 840–1.

A.D. 840 (?)

Munch (*o. c.* ii. 419) has followed the date, 830, of these two last authorities; but it is incorrect. *Cf.* Dümmler, *Ostfr. Geschichte*, i. 188, and Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, ii. 38.

[1] Ermentarius, however, *l. c.*, speaks of it as a Christian victory.

[2] *AS. C.* 837, 838. This is the second recorded *invasion* of England in this century, that preceding Hengstone (A.D. 838) being the first.

According to Theopold (*Kritische Untersuchung über die Quellen der AS. Gesch.*), *Chr.* 837=840, 838=841.

[3] *AS. Chron.* ibid.

[4] Green, *Conq. of England*, pp. 73–4.

reign which brought grave dangers upon England would not have happened under Egberht.[1]

In Valland (France), meantime, Lewis himself had died; and the full fury of civil war had burst forth. And when the rumour thereof spread to the north, the Vikings prepared for new and bolder expeditions. A fleet of unusual dimensions was fitted out, and Oscar,[2] a leader of enterprise and fame, took command of that fleet, which was destined to accomplish great things. Now do the names of the leaders of these expeditions begin to appear in the Christian chronicles.

In the early year of 841 there were heavy rains in France, and the waters of many of the rivers were full to overflowing. And let it be said that in those days all the rivers were fuller than they are now. The thick woods which covered the soil of France, so bare to-day, would ensure a heavy rainfall and full streams. But this spring they —the Seine, for instance—were unusually full. Charles the Bald found his account therein: for he had been waiting for a chance to cross the river behind which Lothair had lately driven him, and then set a guard to protect the stream. But Charles gathered boats and set himself across near Rouen, to the surprise and confusion of Lothair's guards, and made his way eastward, with the intention of joining forces with Lewis the German, as we have already seen. As the king, having got thus happily across, was on his way towards the Maas, a Viking fleet, probably Oscar's, came to the mouth of the same river Seine, and, finding it open and easy of navigation, sailed up.[3] The region was all new to them. There might they see the river in its blue eddies, bathing the fair flowers which grew upon its banks, or, should the moon have brought round a spring tide, they might hear that roar of the *æger* on which their own offspring bestowed this name in memory of the old Norse sea-god.[4]

A.D. 841.

[1] Below, Chapter XII.

[2] More correctly Asgeirr. Storm, *Bidrag*, &c., p. 62.

[3] *Ann. Bert.* a.a.

[4] Ægir. *Qua Sequana cæruleo gurgite perspicuisque cursibus fluens, odoriferasque riparum herbas lambens, fluctuque inflatiore maris sæpe*

The Vikings sailed along until they came to where the rock-built Rouen guarded the river. It was built not upon the shores, but upon the islands (mere rocks) in the mid-stream; a safe place if there had been none but land forces to be feared, but above all others exposed now to the Danish fleets. The Vikings stormed the town, plundered it, and burned a great portion. St. Ouen Abbey, hard by, shared the same fate. Then down the stream again to Jumièges (another abbey), which only saved itself by payment of a fine. The news of the onset came to the ears of Charles, who, as we saw, was bent eastwards on his way to a junction with Lewis; but for the nonce he turned back, and the Vikings, to whom a Frankish king was still an object of terror, put out again to sea.[1]

Now that the lands beyond the Channel had been once explored there were not wanting adventurers to keep the way open. On one side were the rich towns of Neustria, Rouen for example, or—a little to the north—Quentovic (Canche-wick) at the mouth of the Canche, one of the chief trading cities of Northern Europe in those days, a rival to Dorstad. On the other side were the English towns—London, Rochester, Canterbury. We read of a fleet in 842—it may have been Oscar's—falling first upon London; then crossing the Channel to Quentovic, where it arrived just at daybreak. Here was a new experience for one of the prosperous cities and abbeys of Neustria—an experience which foretold many like it. It was one thing to hear stories of raids on distant Frisia, another thing to have the pirate knocking at one's own doors after this fashion. What an experience was that of the people of Quentovic, for instance, when the pirate fleet was found at daybreak[2] to have sailed into the mouth of the Canche, and to be anchored at their very gates. What a hurrying on of clothes and collecting all the ready money

A.D. 842.

reverberata secundum discrimina lunæ inundantis maris pelago se immittit. One of the few passages in Dudo not devoid of a certain charm.

[1] *Normannerne*, ii. 49–50.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* s.a.; Nithard, iv. 3 (P. ii. 669).

possible for a ransom, by which the Danes were induced to sail away. The Vikings were new to their work as yet. In after-years they would have laughed at the bribes which contented them now. From Quentovic the fleet sailed back again to Rochester, which was likewise plundered or compelled to pay a fine.[1]

One likes to linger over these early attacks, so adventurous were they—such an exploring of a new world by the Northmen, comparable to any Cook's voyages, or to the achievements of any Elizabethan buccaneers upon the Spanish seas.

Presently domestic treachery, which was rife enough in the kingdom of Charles, began to beckon to these new allies. Hitherto all had been vague and tentative in the Viking raids. We saw how, as early as 835, they had attacked Noirmoutiers. But they had not yet made any footing there. Now domestic treason called them thither again. Now could they take a leaf out of the same book that their brother Vikings in Ireland had read, and find out friends within the lands they visited. So soon as the civil war was ended began for all the rulers of the Carling Empire the task of subduing their own rebellious vassals or rebellious tributaries —for Lewis the German, his Slavs; for Lothair, the Danes in Frisia; for Charles, first of all, the Bretons in Armorica. And there was another use to be made of some of these difficult subjects; if they could not be made obedient to their lord they might at least be encouraged to attack his enemies. Lothair, it is believed, had already begun to bethink him of this way of revenging the humiliation of Fontenoy[2]; of sending the Danish settlers within his own borders to harry the kingdom

A.D. 843.

[1] *AS. Chron.* 839. There can be no sort of doubt that Quentovic is the place meant by the entry in the English Chronicle, s. a. 839. MSS. A, B, have Cwantawic clearly enough. Later copyists (after Quentovic had sunk into insignificance) have thought that Canterbury was meant; so we have Cantwarabyrig (C); D, E, Cantwic; Otho, B. xi. has Cantwarum. The comparison with *Ann. Bert.* shows the Chronicle to be three years behind the right date. The fight mentioned as taking place at Charmouth in A.D. 840 (*AS. Ch.*) is probably only a repetition of the entry under 833. See Steenstrup, *l. c.*

[2] Peace had not yet been established by the Treaty of Verdun.

of Charles; and the same methods were put in practice by Charles's enemies nearer home. One of the most formidable of these was Lantbert, a count who had already distinguished himself fighting on the side of Lothair. His office was that which Roland once held—Count of the Breton marshes. But the part he played was that of the traitor Ganelon, not Roland's. He leagued himself with the duke or prince of Brittany, Nominoï.[1] Nominoï despatched an army against the new warden of the Marches, Rainald (Reginold)—the same who fought with the Danes at Noirmoutiers in 835. The Breton army was under the command of Erispoï, the heir-apparent of Brittany. It was decisively defeated by Rainald. But Lantbert came up unperceived and caught the Frankish army unawares, and in the engagement which followed Rainald was slain and his troops defeated. Lantbert stirred up Nominoï to throw off all allegiance to Charles.

And now the rebels descried a Viking fleet—Oscar's we may assume—which was cruising near the mouth of the Loire; they adopted the shameful expedient of inviting within their borders these enemies of the Christian name. The allies proceeded to lay siege to Nantes, the chief town of Rainald's county.[2] When the Bretons had long invested it upon the land side,[3] the Viking fleet sailed up the Loire and attacked it, all defenceless, from the river. The Vikings entered the town burning and slaying. It was on St. John's day. In the cathedral they found the Bishop Gunhard celebrating mass; and as he uttered the words *sursum corda* the Viking swords struck him down. He and all the congregation were slain. An awful midsummer festival for Nantes.[4] After many other plunderings the Vikings took hold, for the first time, of Noirmoutiers, which was to become their great arsenal in the future, the storehouse for all the treasure plundered from the villas and monasteries of the Loire. There they abode the winter, and this we may

[1] Or Nomenoë.

[2] He is sometimes called Count of Nantes.

[3] *Ann. Bert.* a. 843.

[4] *Chron. Fontan.* 843 (P. ii. 302), Regino, 853! (Regino's dates are wholly wrong at this point. He says, too, on Easter Sunday). Dümmler, *o. c.* i. 190.

take to be the first wintering of the Vikings on the soil of France.[1]

Far to the south Charles had other troubles, where Bernard, the Count of Gothia (he whom men once said was the father of Charles the Bald), had long been trying to raise himself into an independent ruler. He had never done personal homage to his new king, though he had deputed his son William to do homage for him; and he had taken no part on one side or the other at the battle of Fontenoy. Charles answered this insubordination by treachery.[2] He succeeded in inducing the count to visit his camp before Toulouse. When there, Bernard was seized, tried, and beheaded. But his rebellion was not so easily subdued. William, his son, a mere boy, still held out in Toulouse—that fateful city destined to be the focus of so many rebellions in after-years. Here young Count William was joined by another boy leader, young Pippin, the head of the insurgent party in Southern Aquitaine. And presently these two gained a very important victory over a large body of Charles's troops, under one of his ablest generals—his uncle Hugh, lay-abbot of St. Quentin and of St. Bertin; in the battle Hugh fell.[3] Pippin and William now turned to the same expedient which Nominoï and Lantbert had adopted. They called in a Viking fleet—still Oscar's most probably—which sailed up the Garonne to Toulouse. We do not know how far it aided the rebels in their resistance to Charles. But for the Vikings themselves this was a new and rare experience—a visit to the rich vine-lands of Southern France. And having got so far they ventured even further, and made a foray upon the northern coast of Spain, not (first) upon Arabic Spain, but upon the little independent Christian kingdom in the north-west—the last remains of the once mighty power of the Visigoths.

A.D. 844.

The little kingdom of Asturias, rocky and bare, edged in between the sea, the Pyrenees, and the Arab Emirate in the

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 843, 'insulam quamdam'—Noirmoutiers. *Chr. Aq.* 846.

[2] *Ann. Fuld.* a.a. 844.

[3] *Ann. Bert.* a. 844.

south, hardly seemed—so small and insignificant it was—to have any part in the history of Europe. Its chronicles at this time consist of little more than dynastic lists. But its destinies were great. It was the germ out of which the better known kingdom of Leon was to grow: as out of the kingdom of Leon was to grow the monarchy of Spain. Small as it was, this rock-bound kingdom did not escape the notice of the Vikings; and it has, among Christian states, the unique honour of being one upon which their attacks were uniformly unsuccessful. The Vikings, with a fleet of 150 sail, began ravaging the country around Corunna (*Forum Brigantium*). Ramiro I. was the king who at this moment sat upon the Asturian throne. He collected an army, gave battle to the Vikings, gained a bloody victory, and burnt no less than seventy of the enemy's fleet: whereat the raiders withdrew from his kingdom.

The pirates now coasted round the north of Portugal and on to Lisbon. They were now off the Arab coasts, face to face with a new foe.[1] On shore they would now have to encounter, not a militia which was the best the Christian lands could produce, not a fyrd nor a ban and arrière ban, but a regular standing army. But more than that, the Vikings would also find a navy. El-Hákim had created this navy some thirty years ago, and it was now under the command of no less a ruler than the brave and accomplished Abd-Er-Rahman II. The adventurers would find, too, men trained in piracies like their own. They would find not only ships which had been stationed to keep guard along all the Spanish coasts, but adventurous fleets which had made attacks upon the Italian and Provençal towns, and which had ere now made a lodgment (*their* Noirmoutiers) at the mouth of the Rhone—on the flat alluvial island of Camargue. Yet the Vikings, in the delight of this new adventure of theirs, seemed loath to turn back. For with all these dangers they found, too, a land rich as no Christian land was rich, gorgeous with mosques and schools, the best in Europe, with canals, roads, the warehouses of

[1] Fabricius, *Forbindelserne mellem Norden og den Sp. Halvö.* pp. 30–57; Gayangos, *Mohamm. dyn. in Spain*; Dozy, *Recherches*, &c., ii. 273 *sqq.*

merchants—a booty abundantly tempting if they could get near it. So they sailed on. At Lisbon a fleet of Arab ships lay in wait for them and drove them off with loss; but they continued their voyage to the south of the peninsula, to Cadiz, to Medina Sidonia, and then back up the Guadalquivir to Seville (September 25th). All these places they plundered. Abd-Er-Rahman finally sent a detachment of troops against them. The Vikings were at first successful (September 29th and October 1st); afterwards the Arabs were reinforced and gained the victory (November 17th), burning many of the Viking ships. This really put an end to the hopes of the Northmen; though in revenge they made one or two more descents upon places on the coast of Portugal. Eventually they put out to sea and were heard of no more.

How wide now had grown the theatre of the Vikings' ravages. In the far north we may feel sure that by this time they had already taken firm footing, in the Shetlands, in the Orkneys, in the greater part of Caithness, in the Hebrides. These were their fixed stations whence they swooped down upon the lowlands, upon Northumbria, or upon Ireland. In Ireland they were under Thorgils seated in the northern portion—in Conn's Half—and had beside lesser stations all round the coast. In England, on the Wessex coast, they had as yet only made attacks. But they had gone so far as to ravage the chief towns of Kent, and had once plundered London; on the east coast and in the inner marshlands they had also been seen. Half Frisia was theirs, what with the settlements of quasi-Christian Northmen in Rustringia and in Walcheren, and the constant preparedness of the Vikings to descend upon any of the rich cities which stood along the river banks in that region. Of late the pirates had been seen upon most of the great rivers of France—the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne; and now their destroying sails had shown themselves, and they had plundered along all the coasts of Spain, Christian and Mahommedan, as far as to the Pillars of Hercules.

A.D. 840–5.

II.

The winter which preceded 845 was a season of unusual severity,[1] cold north winds lasting long into the spring, withering the young vine-shoots and arresting the growth of corn. So that something like a regular famine set in. There were earthquakes too, and divers heavenly signs, perplexing to the nations.[2] And what was observed with superstition, as also a sign from heaven, the wolves (emblems of the northern wolves who are about to sweep upon us) became in these seasons through scarcity and through cold extraordinarily numerous and fierce. They assembled in great cohorts, marching and manœuvring like an army (so the chroniclers would have us believe), and attacking with fatal results small towns and villages. Surely the Day of the Lord was at hand.

A.D. 845.

It was now fifty years since the ravage of Lindisfarne, the real beginning of the Viking Fury—almost half the Viking Age had passed by. In the far west it was a crisis in which one phase of Viking conquest came to an end by the drowning of Turgesius in Loch Owel. In the most eastern parts of the Vikings' theatre of war it was the time for a new beginning of quite another sort. The year 845 was the year of two great efforts on the part of the Vikings—one against Germany, the first great attack against any part of Lewis's realm; the other an attack upon the rising capital of Charles's kingdom—the city of Paris.

It is almost a wonder that the Danes were not earlier attracted by the wide mouth of the Elbe on which lay, so conveniently near the sea, the rich and growing town of Hamburg. Hamburg was not as yet at all comparable to Dorstad as a centre of trade. But *longo intervallo* it stood probably next to it among the northern cities which had an outlet to the German Ocean. It had not long since (831) been erected into an Archbishopric, and the travel-worn Anscar, who had lately returned from his

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 845.

[2] Two earthquakes in this year. *Ann. Xant.* 845.

first expedition into Sweden, was made its archbishop. In the spring of 845 a fleet of no less than six hundred sail[1]—the largest Viking fleet yet on record—suddenly appeared in sight off Hamburg. It had been despatched by Horik, the Danish king, himself; though Horik was nominally at peace with Lewis the German. There was no time for the Hamburgers to send for troops or to prepare for resistance. Anscar had to fly—bearing his relics—and wandered awhile disconsolately among the woods of Saxony. The Vikings, who had forced an entry into the city within twenty-four hours of their first appearance before the walls, abode there a night and a day, killed many of the citizens, burned the church and monastery, and then sailed back down the Elbe. Anscar returned to lament over the ruins of his beloved church and city, but with a chastened and decorous sorrow. 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.'[2]

This same year another fleet was fitted out in Denmark. The captain of it was, it is thought, that famous legendary Viking hero, Ragnar Lodbrok. For some reason, which we cannot now fathom, Ragnar has remained in Norse tradition the representative of the Viking hero. But before the legends of Ragnar Lodbrok grew up in the north, the Viking Age had changed its character. The idea of the Viking life no longer represented a great combat between heathendom and Christendom; far more a desultory warfare carried on by one nation of Scandinavians against another, or by the outlaws of some Scandinavian state against the party in power. Consequently the stories of Ragnar's life present no authentic features dating from the time with which we are concerned, and bear little or nothing of the character of the adventures of this age.

In the civil war in Denmark, whose outbreak just preceded

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 846; *Ann. Xant.* 6; *Ann. Fuld.* 845. *Ann. Xant.* say that the Frisians defeated the Vikings more than once this year, with the loss of twelve thousand men (!); *Ann. Fuld.* say the Vikings fought three battles against the Frisians, that they were beaten in the first and victorious in the other two.

[2] *Vita Anscari*, c. 16 (Pertz, ii. 700). This taking of Hamburg is wrongly ascribed by Lappenberg to the year 840.

the death of Charlemagne, we have seen how a certain Anulo, fighting against his cousin Siegfred, fell, along with his rival, in a great battle; and how his brother and representative, Harald, was chosen king. Some writers would see in the word Anulo (Annulo—Annulus) only a Latinization of the Norse name Ring, which is that of the father of Ragnar Lodbrok.[1] And if this view were accepted we should have Ragnar standing in rather the ideal position of the Viking leader, close to the throne yet with no acknowledged claim to succession—a person whom both the rival parties in the kingdom would have had an interest in pressing to leave it. For when Harald's party fell, and Horik came to the throne of South Denmark, Harald's nephew had no better prospect of succession than before.

This is a possible explanation of Ragnar's pre-eminence in Norse tradition. He may have been one of the first of the royal stock who devoted himself wholly to the Viking life. In those early Viking days, when Horik mounted the throne—not yet five-and-twenty years since the first Viking expedition worthy of the name—no leader of royal blood had, perhaps, taken part in these far voyages. Danish kings had fitted out fleets, as Godfred had done, as Horik was to do, to ravage the territory of the Christian Emperor. But to do this—even to take command of one such fleet—was a very different thing from a life devoted to the adventures of a 'sea king,' which we may suppose was the life of Ragnar Lodbrok. This might account for his popularity in northern tradition.

In the cases of Hasting and Hrolf, personages who are both historical and mythical, we find them credited with the leadership in many important Viking expeditions, whereas the contemporary annals make no mention of them. It is quite possible, however, that they were really present in these voyages, but that they were present as subordinates only.

[1] The identification would be altogether far-fetched were it not for the tradition of the great battle in which Ring engaged a Harald (Harald Hildetand) while Ragnar fought by his side. Munch's reckoning for the date of Ragnar's birth is A.D. 740 or 750, more than a hundred years before we begin to hear of his sons—Munch's Ragnar Lodbrok could not, of course, have taken part in the siege of Paris in A.D. 845.

Something the same may have been the case with Ragnar. He may have borne a share in many of the earlier Viking cruises, though the chroniclers make no mention of him; and on account of his royal descent and his after-achievements tradition may have promoted him to the rank of leader in them.

Of the Norse history of Ragnar's life which grew up in later centuries it is not necessary to say much, so utterly fabulous is it, not even uniform in the traditions of different countries. The very dates are inconsistent. Ragnar, in one account, is said to have lived three generations earlier than the first colonists of Iceland, which would put back his birth to something like 780.[1] But his sons, who are more conspicuous than he himself in the actual Viking history, were flourishing ninety or a hundred years later. Halfdan, for instance, seems to have been killed about 878; Ubbe, another son, very nearly at the same time. They neither of them died of old age. Other of the sons of Lodbrok were probably alive still later.

The north was full of fabulous stories of Ragnar Lodbrok, the best known of which was the tale of how he won Thora to wife from out the house where she was guarded by the dragon, the 'Lindworm,' who lay upon a pile of gold. It would be no more than a repetition of the history of Sigurd the Völsung, and of I know not how many heroes of northern fable, save that it makes Lodbrok gain his victory and his own nickname by putting on the celebrated 'hairy breeks,' which were impervious to the dragon's teeth.

[1] Not certainly if we bring down the date of the discovery of Iceland as Vigfusson would do (see *C. P. B.* ii. 487). But however that may be, the two Icelandic Sagas in the Fornaldar Sögur which contain the account of Ragnar's life, cannot be shown to be earlier than the thirteenth century. The ballad supposed to have been sung by Ragnar as he lay in the serpent pit of Ælla (the Krakumál) is perhaps earlier. Saxo's account (*Hist. Dan.* ix.) brings Ragnar into connection with some events in the history of Denmark which have been related in previous chapters, *e.g.*, with the Harald who was baptized at Mainz in A.D. 826. Saxo's Ragnar is Harald's rival for the throne of Denmark. On the strength of this connection (such as it is) some writers have identified Ragnar with Reginfred, Harald's brother. See Storm, *Kritiske Undersögelse*, &c., and above, p. 197.

Another of Ragnar's marriages, that with the girl Kraka, whose real name was Aslaug, and who proved to be the daughter of Sigurd Fafnisbane himself, does bring Ragnar in actual connection with the Völsung epic cycle.

The stories of Ragnar's conquests in Sweden, in Finland, in Russia, and in England, are, as they have come to us, wholly out of character with the adventures of a hero in the earlier Viking Age; though I think it not unlikely that there may have been some corresponding real adventures out of which these fabulous conquests have grown. We cannot, for instance, deny the significance of the existence of a real king 'Ælla' in England, just at the time when Ragnar's sons make their great invasion of this country—a short-reigned king, whose name could never have been preserved in Norse tradition save through some special connection with Viking exploits.

In the expedition, whereof we have now to speak, alone, of 845, do we find Ragnar figuring in authentic history. This expedition, we have reason to believe, like the one which almost at the same time set sail for the Elbe, was fitted out by Horik himself, or under his immediate sanction. The fleet consisted of a hundred and twenty sail, and in March, 845, it made its way to the mouth of the Seine and navigated once again to Rouen. The Vikings were not this time content with plundering Rouen and the neighbourhood, but continued their sail up the river as far as Chalevanne, near St. Germains-en-Laye. Charles the Bald heard of their coming, and called together what troops he might. But the people were weary with the long civil war, with the battles against Lothair, Pippin, Bernard, Count Lambert, Nominoï, king of Brittany; in which, if Charles had gained some great advantages, he had suffered many defeats. During this period of half-anarchy, too, and civil war, the nobles had grown more and more independent and disinclined to fulfil their duties as vassals. They would content themselves with defending their own estates, and the inland nobles had no fear of Viking onslaught—they deemed they had cause for none. So it was only with a small army that Charles, after

one vain attempt to check the advance of Ragnar, threw himself into the strong abbey of St. Denis to watch, rather than oppose, the approaching Danish fleet. This, after a prosperous sail, almost unchecked, came, towards the end of the month—for the first time in Viking history—under the walls of Paris. It had navigated into far-inland regions, which formed till now a *terra incognita* to the Northmen.

The island city of the Seine—its extent was only what the *île de la cité* is to-day—was beginning to emerge into notice, and make for itself a place among the chief cities of the kingdom. The early Carling kings had little to say to it. Pippin of Heristal alone of this family had been buried near its walls, in St. Denis' Abbey; and one of the first public acts of Paris in Carling days was the part it took in giving a head to the rebellion of Pippin of Aquitaine against his father. It began in this wise—as Palgrave says—its career as a city of revolutions. Paris had been a quasi-royal town under the Merovingians, during at least some portion of the Merovingian period: we know that our Queen Berchta was the daughter of the king of Paris. The succeeding dynasty had its chief royal seats at Aix, at Rheims, and Laon, never here. But with or without royal favour Paris continued to grow by virtue of the inherent advantages of its situation. The protection of the river had perhaps been the reason that induced the Gauls of the tribe of the Parisii to settle on that swampy place, and, like the lake-dwellers of Switzerland, to raise upon its muddy soil the cluster of huts which earned for the site its unsavoury name, *Lutetia Parisiorum* — mud-town of the Parisii. A.D. 845.

The descendants of the old Parisii lived on, a sturdy population of merchants, mechanics, and boatmen — or, as we should say, bargees; sturdy, rebellious, not over-scrupulous; living in part by the cost of pilotage and porterage up and down the stream; in part, less honourably, by the tolls which their island position enabled them to exact. The town yielded to few towns in France for the sacredness of its associa-

tions. Paris itself was dedicated to the Virgin, as the cathedral church of 'Our Lady' serves still to remind us; and it stood under the almost immediate guardianship of four great monasteries—St. Denis, St. Geneviève, and the two St. Germains—l'Auxerrois and des Près. No inconsiderable part of its future fortune Paris owed to the fame of these saints. What help it might expect at their hands now the event was to show.

The merchants and bargemen of Paris did little themselves to defend their homes or their shrines; and, almost unopposed, the Vikings came, on March 28, 845, pouring into the city, slaying and burning. Unrestrained by any divine fear they stormed into the sacred places. The saints cannot, it seems, protect their own! But stay—while the marauders are still in the Church of St. Germanus, behold a thick fog falls upon them. They are 'blinded by the darkness of their own wickedness,' say some of the Frankish chroniclers. 'They are seized with a frenzy,' say others. According to the tradition of their own people in long after-years, these Vikings had voyaged to the region of mists and enchantments — Bjarmaland.[1] Certain it is, in sober language, that they were enveloped in a thick fog, in which both they and the Christians saw something supernatural. The fog was so dense that they could with difficulty find their way back to their ships. Many lost themselves, and were slain by the enraged Parisians. And worse than this, it was a kind of choleraic mist. (The winter, we remember, had been one of extraordinary severity and of

[1] Aimon, *Mirac. S. Germ.* (Acta SS. May 28th); Duchesne, ii. 657; *Ann Xant.* a.a.; *Ann. Bert.* relate the same event, but refer it to an attack on St. Bertin. The Northmen are 'struck with blindness and madness,' and Horik declares himself ready to restore prisoners and plunder (a.a. 845). Saxo Gram. *Hist. Dan.* ix. (ed. Holder, 1866, p. 308). See Chapter V. The account in Saxo is wholly consistent with the way in which we know that myths travel and change their meaning. The earlier Vikings having fancied themselves in Bjarmaland when they were attacking Paris, the story in Saxo is transferred to the geographical Bjarmaland, *i.e.*, to Perm in the north of Russia. But how mythical a place Saxo's Bjarmaland really is, can be judged from the story of Gorm's voyage to the same place (Ibid. p. 287 *seq.*). Then learning from Christian sources of Ragnar's attack on Paris, Saxo transfers that also to his history. For another aspect of the same event see Pasch. Radb. in Migne, t. 120, col. 1220.

extraordinary mortality; this illness was perhaps the result of some sudden warm spring weather supervening upon the intense cold.) The fleet's crew were, on their return, seized with a dysentery which did not leave them even when they had reached home with their booty. Ragnar sailed back to Denmark, and brought to Horik the king a pillar which he had plundered from St. Germain's Church. But he and his followers likewise brought with them the sickness which had accompanied the fleet, and which, it is said, now began to make havoc in Horik's capital; until he bethought him of sending back the Christian prisoners unransomed, when, as we are told, the illness was stayed. Perhaps as a mere sanitary precaution his dismissal of the prisoners was to be recommended.

Whatever be the real history of this incident, its occurrence and the impression which it made upon both Christians and heathens is a matter beyond dispute. And it is a matter well worth noting. In earthly weapons Western Christendom from this time forward for many years made no head against the Vikings. But her spiritual arms were imperceptibly recovering what was lost by the temporal ones, and were slowly undermining the power of the Northmen at the very time that power was being raised; just as Christianity had done once before in the case of the earlier Teutonic 'Wanderers.' Like the Teutonic nations who had preceded them, when the Northmen passed within the charmed circle of the Roman Church, their old creed seemed to forsake them. Their gods could not breathe in the new air. The story just related is one of many instances of the *haunted life* which the Northmen sometimes led between their growing sense of the power of the Christian God and their continued defiance of the Christian armies. How many instances there are of a victorious northern conqueror, in the midst of his career of victory, abandoning the creed of his own people and adopting that of the people he despised and had just conquered. In this wise when a few generations had elapsed, from being the enemies, the Northmen became the doughtiest

champions of the Church, though in their own dark way—the Puritans of mediæval Christendom.

We have sometimes in the later personal biographies of the Scandinavians incidents which illustrate the process of the Vikings' conversion, and of what I have called their haunted life before that conversion was completed, which belonged to a great part of the Viking Age. In the story, for example, of Gisli Súrson, or Gisli the Outlaw,[1] we have a typical example. This Gisli lived, of course, a century and more after the Vikings who were now beginning to harry Europe; but what *they* went through in the ninth century the Icelanders were beginning to go through in the tenth and eleventh.[2] Of Gisli we first hear how he and his friend Vesstein go, in the course of a merchant voyage, to Viborg, in Denmark, and for the sake of carrying on trade with the Christians there, allow themselves to be marked with the cross. Afterwards we hear incidentally that, since he had been at Viborg, Gisli had left off heathen sacrifices. Then we have the account of the two dream-wives who visit him, one of whom is soft and mild, the other dreadful and bloody like a Valkyria. 'I have two women who sit with me in my dreams,' he says, 'one is good to me, but the other tells me nought but evil, and her tale is every day worse and worse, and she spaes me downright ruin. But what I just dreamed is this: Methought I came to a house or a hall; into the hall I went, and there I saw many of my friends and kinsfolk, and they sat by fires and drank. There were seven fires; some had burned very low, but some still burned, as bright as bright could be. Then in came my better dream-wife, and said these were tokens of my life, how much of it was to come; and she counselled me so long as I lived, to leave all old *misbeliefs and witchcraft and to be good to the deaf and the halt and the poor and the weak.*'

[1] *Gisla Saga Súrsonar*—'Gisli the Outlaw.' Dasent.

[2] The date given for Gisli is A.D. 930–980. The Life itself was no doubt made some time after the latter date.

This picture—the black and white spirits (so common in Christian folk-lore),[1] of whom one, like a Valkyria, gives bloody counsel, the other, like an angel, is full of Christian maxims; the seven fires (a touch of St. Fursey here); then again the more Eddaic picture of the dead friends and kinsfolk drinking in the hall—it is a true combination of Christian and heathen mythology.

[1] Compare, for example, the well-known story of Hackelberg as given in Kuhn's *Sagen Gebräuche u. Märchen* ii. no. 9. Hackelberg is, according to Vigfussón, an Icelander—Hekla personified, in fact. But I greatly doubt.

CHAPTER X.

DEFENCES BROKEN DOWN.

A.D. 846–A.D. 858.

I.

THE Scandinavians adopted a special name, *Primsigning*[1]—first-signing—for the custom of allowing oneself to be marked with a cross, as we saw that Gisli did in his day. Even now this had become not infrequent among the Northmen, especially in those countries which bordered upon the empire—or, in other words, upon the kingdom of Lewis; for he now owned the marches between Germany and Denmark. The custom was useful for trade purposes among others. But it had also a certain religious significance of a highly characteristic kind. It was a half-way house on the road to baptism. It did not commit the recipient too far. But at the same time there was a sort of charm in it—against disease, the darts of enemies, and so forth.

Baptism itself the Northerners, or in fact converted heathens of any sort, generally put off as late as possible, till their death-beds if that might be; following the example, for instance, of Slavomir, the king of the Abodriti in Charlemagne's day, who remained a heathen till he was upon his death-bed,

[1] Also *þrimsignan*, see Vigfusson, *Icel. Dict.* s. v. primsigna, and *Njála*, 158.

and then had himself baptized; or much more distinguished examples among the converted Romans in the early days of Christianity, such as that of the great Constantine himself. And why? Not so much, or at any rate not only, that they might defer the evil hour when they must renounce many of their old pleasures; but because baptism, as a sacrament, was to them one of the supreme magic rites of the Christian Church —a church which had so many strange dealings with the supernatural world—a supreme charm against the devil and the dark powers from below. To die in the white garments of baptism was to go straight to the Christian heaven,[1] and to go straight away from the Christian hell in which, at any rate, these heathens were beginning to believe and tremble.

The seed planted by St. Fursey long ago, or, if you will, still longer ago by the Seer of Patmos, had grown and borne fruit. The lives of the saints begin now to be filled with visions of the celestial and infernal kingdoms. Men trembled before the skyey portents, which were, perhaps, rather exceptionally common in this century—comets, eclipses, meteor showers, northern lights; that curious dispersion in the air of a tiny fungoid growth causing the descending rain or snow to be tinged with red, which hence, in popular superstition, becomes a rain of blood—all these natural phenomena, looked at with the eye of fear, took spectral and portentous shapes.

Add to these motives the more commonplace influence of trade; the material advantages which some places such as Sleswick—which for a short while was a town of the empire —were visibly gaining through peaceful intercourse between Dane and Christian; and you have the explanation of the peace which soon began to reign upon the borders of Lewis's kingdom, in the very parts where matters had looked most threatening in Charlemagne's day.

In more distant fields, however, things did not always go smoothly with the missionaries. About the time when Horik the Dane was setting on foot the two great expeditions which

[1] Thus, in the life of Anscar, Rimbert speaks of the many northern converts who, dying in their baptismal garments, went straight to heaven.

in the same year fell upon Paris and upon Hamburg, there was a rising of the Swedes in far-away Sigtuna against the colony of Christians planted by Anscar. Gauzbert, the first bishop of the country, was driven forth, his nephew was killed, and for some years after that the flock in Sweden was without a pastor. A few of the new creed remained faithful to the belief they had learned; among others Herigar, the Earl or governor of Birca island.[1] And stories of the wonders by which these converts had testified the power of their faith travelled south and gave joy in Christian circles. Herigar imitated the miracle of Elijah or Gideon, and, as a heavy raincloud was on the point of bursting, he prayed in contest with the heathen priests that no rain should fall upon him or those who stood by his side; which happened as he had desired, whereas the priests of Odin a few paces off were caught in a deluge. At another time, when a certain exiled Swedish king returned, supported by a Danish contingent to destroy the town of Birca, Herigar obtained by his prayers that the king's heart should be changed, and that the Danes themselves should be induced to sail away, and, instead of Birca, to attack one of the Slavonic towns upon the Baltic coast.[2] Stories like these, I say, travelled south, and were no doubt eagerly welcomed by the Christians; but that much impression was made upon the Swedes themselves by these marvels does not appear. The Christian missionaries were in need of such comfort as they could gather, for that there had been no fulfilment of the high hopes which accompanied the foundation of the Hamburg archbishopric was only too evident.

It was an archbishopric, one of but three in the dominions

[1] *Vita Anscari*, c. 19 (Pertz, ii. 701 *sq.*).

[2] Or Curland on the Gulf of Finland, which had formerly belonged to the kings of Suithiod, but had now made itself independent. The Danes attacked the Curlanders, but were driven off. Aterwards the Swedes, besieging one of their towns, Pilten, without success, were on the point of retiring, after having vainly called on all their gods in turn. They at last bethought them of the Christians' God. When He had been invoked, the Curlanders of their own accord sounded a parley and offered a ransom of one pound of silver for every head in the town. *Vita Ans.* c. 30; cf. *Ann. Xan.* 845 and note on following page.

of Lewis the German; but an archbishopric, one might almost say, without parishes; only four baptistries (baptismal churches)[1] formed its diocese. In revenues it had lost hugely through the Abbey of Turhout, which had been originally assigned for its maintenance, falling to the portion of Charles the Bald, and being by him converted to his own uses. The heathen lands had not 'come in;' but the Vikings had done so in most disastrous fashion in 845, and now, too, Hamburg itself, the greater part of the town and its cathedral, lay all black cinders, and Anscar had been driven out to wander in the neighbouring forests.

However in 847 he was reinstated, first as Bishop of Bremen, afterwards again Archbishop of Hamburg, with an enlarged diocese.[2] And he soon began to exert himself to spread Christianity among his heathen neighbours. The interposition of St. Germanus in the memorable Paris siege produced its effect upon King Horik. Count Cobbo, Lewis's ambassador to the Dane, reported that Ragnar the Viking on his return from Paris brought to his master spoils from the St. Germain's Church, a porphyry pillar and other things robbed from the church itself; that while he was still in converse with the king he was seized with the fatal sickness. In vain he vowed to restore what he had carried away for his own spoil—a silver image of St. Germain for one thing—for after three days' agony he died. Horik trembled. He sent ambassadors to Lewis to say he had set all his Christian prisoners at liberty.[3] A.D. 847.

Of Ragnar's death we may take leave to doubt. We have one or two stories of exactly this date detailing the fatal effects

[1] *Vita Ansc.* c. 22.

[2] *Vita Ansc.* c. 21–23, and Adam of Bremen Gesta H. Pont. i. The whole history of the transactions connected with the Archbishopric of Hamburg is rather complicated. Cf. Migne T. 119, col. 876.

[3] Aimon, *Mirac. S. Germ.* i. c. 7; *Ann. Xant.* 845 (Rorik for Horik). The description of the casting lots in the passage in *A. X.* is very interesting. It is the casting of twigs (*teina*) used for sortege, as in *Landnáma*, iii. 8; or in a passage of *Vell-Ekla*, where Earl Hakon casts twigs by the Gauta rocks before fighting with Othere. Cf. *Hymiskv.*, 'hristo teina,' 'they shook the twigs' (in a cloth or bag?). This sort of divination should not be confounded with that by the divining *rod*, as in *C. P. B.* Index.

produced by sacrilegious plunder. The effects are magical. Even those who unwittingly harbour the unclean thing pay in goods or life, or in the lives of those dearest to them. They find out the cause of their suffering, perhaps, just when the last member of their family has died. By this time there could scarcely have been a single living Viking who had not borne a part in the plundering of some shrine; had the effects of sacrilege been everywhere so sweeping, half of the Scandinavian race must have incontinently perished. If the Ragnar of the Paris siege was the Ragnar Lodbrok of tradition he certainly did not die then and in that wise. We may rather believe that, pocketing his share of the seven thousand pounds of silver[1] which Charles had paid as a ransom, he set out in search of fresh adventures on his own account. Some memory of these may have been rightly preserved by tradition, though history has nothing to tell of them. The mythic legend of Ragnar Lodbrok sends him cruising to Russia, to Sweden, and to England. Some of these voyages he may have made now.

What appears certain with regard to the Ragnar incident is that Horik, for his part, really renounced his truculent plundering ways. We read of no more expeditions organized by him; and ere long we read of the close friendship which sprang up between him and the Archbishop of Hamburg, and how, finally, Anscar got leave to build a Christian church (the Church of Our Lady) in Horik's capital, the trading town of Sleswick, whither Christian merchants were always resorting.[2] So that on this border of the empire there was peace, and Lewis the German's troubles with his Scandinavian neighbours were for the present at an end.

Lewis had, however, other troubles of his own. The Slavonic people upon his eastern borders had begun, during the disturbance of the civil war, to bethink them what steps they should take to throw off the unloved Frankish rule. They had never been bound by more than a slender tie to the empire of Charlemagne. Now seemed the time to get rid even of that. And at the very moment when Horik's ambassadors

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 845. [2] *Vita Ansc.* c. 24.

sought Lewis at Paderborn, he was raising an army to bring to obedience the most northern of the Slavonic people on his borders, the Abodriti.[1] These did not venture to await the invasion, but sued for peace. But almost immediately, one after another like a peal of bells, the other Slavonic people took up the same note of rebellion. First it was the Sorabians or Sorbs, the next neighbours of the Abodriti. Then it was the turn of the Moravians, and when an army despatched by Lewis had laid waste their country and was returning through the territory of the Bohemians, these, in their turn rose, caught the Frankish troops in a morass and inflicted severe losses upon them.[2] A.D. 846.

The other rulers of the empire had to bear the brunt of the Viking attacks which in some parts, especially in Lothair's Frisian province, soon became almost incessant. I say rulers of the *empire;* for in theory it was still one vast Frankish Empire, with different parts placed under the special protection of different kings, the elder alone (Lothair) bearing the imperial title; and in this stage it continued so long as all the three sons of Lewis the Pious remained alive. A kind of legal fiction of an empire; but still a definite stage upon the road to complete disintegration.

We may remember this thing, moreover, that even in its days of greatest oneness the Frankish Empire was always more a legal unity than a real one. So far as it had one ruler, Lewis the Pious, it was one. But the enactments of that emperor were not made without the sanction of his great councils, his Champs de Mai. And it depended in a great measure upon the neighbourhood in which that assembly was held what colour was given to its proceedings. If Paris or Orleans were rebellious, Lewis had but to call a council at Nymuegen or Aix to find the tables turned and men at his devotion. A commanding personality such as that of Charlemagne could impress a character

[1] Cf. *Ann. Fuld.* 845, and *Xant.* 846. These accounts do not quite agree.

[2] *Ann. Fuld.; Xant.; Bert.*

of unity on all the heterogeneous mass. But under a lesser ruler its components necessarily fell apart.

A.D. 846–7. To the imagination of the Vikings the Frankish Empire was still no doubt what it was in fiction only, an undivided whole into which they were still peering with uncertain eager gaze. Each year they grew more familiar with the sights which it disclosed. In Frisia they were already beginning to feel at home. The year after the Paris and Hamburg sieges, and the year after that, they came up the Rhine once more as far as Dorstad which was again plundered and burnt.[1] 'As usual,' says one chronicler, 'they plundered in Ostergau and Westergau (Frisia).'[2] The three kings met in 847 at Meersen,[3] and they sent a joint message to Horik of Denmark that they should hold him responsible if these attacks continued.[4] There was something—in appearance at any rate—awful in a threat proceeding from the joint rulers of nearly all Western Christendom. Nevertheless, the attacks went on. Horik probably had nothing to do with them. The Vikings were growing into a separate body, almost a new nationality, with kings or leaders of their own. The reply these made to the Meersen 'joint note' was to sail up this year nine miles above Dorstad. And in Charles the Bald's kingdom they were equally truculent and threatening. They burnt the abbey of Noirmoutiers in 846. From this time, or near it, Noirmoutiers became one of the fixed strongholds of the Vikings, from which they were never afterwards dislodged. The same Loire Vikings raided the following year on the mainland and burnt the monastery of Herbauge; and now Oscar's fleet sailed once more to the south and laid siege to Bordeaux.[5] Here Charles had some success against them and captured nine of their vessels. Bordeaux itself held out to the autumn of 848, and then (as modern Frenchmen would have been) its defenders

A.D. 848–9. were *trahis*—by the Jews as they declared[6]—or the town would never have been captured by the Vikings. 'The

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* s.a. [2] *Ann. Xan.* s.a.
[3] Pertz, *Leges*, i. 393 *sqq.* [4] *Ann. Bert.*
[5] *Chron. Fontanell.* 848, *cf.* 851 (P. ii. 303–4). [6] *Bert.*, 848.

Northmen,' says a chronicler, in these years, 'as they were wont to do, put the Christians to shame and grew more and more in strength. But it is a sorrow to have to write these things.' [1]

A.D. 850–1.

850 and 851, the mid years of this disastrous century, were years of peculiar misery for Northern Europe; for our island as well as for the Continental states. Rorik, that brother of Harald the baptized; whom we have already often encountered, Rorik the *fel Christianitatis*, was plundering in Frisia and had to be bought off. Lothair had begun by expelling him from his fief of Dorstad on the ground of treachery. He took refuge in Saxony and remained under the protection of Lewis. And there (more or less with the countenance of the German king) he fitted out a fleet and with it fell upon the very territory from which he had been expelled. Lothair had no other course than to restore him to favour. He gave over to him almost all the lands in his northern province, on which the Vikings had begun to fasten, on condition of his protecting the country from other fleets.[2] We may believe that Lothair was ready enough to wink at any plundering of the territory of his neighbours, especially of Charles the Bald, against whom, in spite of formal treaties, his anger smouldered. It was, likely enough, agreeable to an arrangement between Lothair and Rorik that part of Rorik's fleet under Godfred, Harald's son, sailed south into West Francia, into Flanders, and plundered Therouanne. Oscar, too (his Bordeaux siege now successfully ended), came northward to the same district. Ghent—not yet the great Ghent of the Middle Ages, but a growing town [3]—fell before his attacks, and the abbey of St. Bavo hard by. From Flanders Oscar and Godfred returned together to the Seine and harried far and wide. Lothair, says one chronicle, was ready to join with Charles in attacking these

[1] *Ann. Xant.* 848–9.

[2] *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; *Ann. Xant.* a.a.; *Ann. Bert.* 852. The chronology is very uncertain at this period.

[3] *Ann. Lobienses*, 850 (Pertz, ii. 195); *Ann. Gand.* 851 (P. ii. 187). Ghent lay just on the borders of Lothair's and Charles's territories.

Vikings but the West Frank king preferred separately to come to terms with Godfred.

In the autumn of the year 850 these Vikings of the Seine discovered an old tomb of one Givoldus, and this they converted into a strong fortified camp, and wintered there in the midst of the Seine country.[1] Among the places which fell before their arms was a monastery not very far from the mouth of the river, a place of ancient foundation, for it owed its origin to one of the Irish missionaries in France. From him it took its name of St. Wandrille, to us it is better known from the old Latin name of the place as Fontanelle, and for the sake of its chronicle written, part of it, in these very years, it deserves to be held in remembrance by the historian.[2] Add to all these evils that in some parts of the empire there was such terrible famine that people are said to have killed and eaten their own children.[3]

A.D. 851?

Meanwhile another fleet, prepared by Rorik, a gigantic fleet of 350 sail, made for the English coast. Hitherto the Viking attacks upon England had been but desultory. The earliest, as we have seen, came in all probability from Ireland—the earliest, I mean, in this century; those quite preliminary exploring raids in 787 and 793–5, I leave out of account. The Irish series of raids ended with the battle of Hengstone in 838, or soon after. The next attack of any importance[4] was the one made by a fleet which was in all probability Oscar's, engaged in making its way through the Channel to seek a field of adventure on the western coast of France. This is the raid recorded in our chronicle as the great slaughter in London, Quentovic, and Rochester. It is given under date 839; the true year is undoubtedly 842, the date given in the Frankish chronicles for the attack on Quentovic, just the time when,

A.D. 850.

[1] In 850–1 or 851–2; see *Ann. Fuld.* 850; *Chron. Font.* 852.

[2] Steenstrup places the attack on Fontenailles in A.D. 852. *Norm.* ii. 162.

[3] *Ann. Bert.* 850.

[4] There were engagements at Southampton and at Port in 840; the first an English, the second a Viking victory.

(before and after Fontenoy) Oscar's fleet was beginning to plunder in the Seine and the Loire. The next reliable entry in the chronicle is under the year 845, probably for 846.[1] It records an English victory on the Parret in Somersetshire. Hitherto we had suffered less than any other land of Western Christendom. We lay between two eddies: one the Norse stream, which swept round Scotland and submerged the Scottish islands and almost submerged Ireland; the other, the Danish eddy, which swept round the coasts of Frisia, Flanders, France, and Aquitaine.

But the year in which Rorik's great fleet sighted our coasts was a memorable one in the history of the Viking raids in England.[2] The fleet made for the mouth of the Thames. The Isle of Thanet was then in reality an island accessible on all sides to the light Danish craft. They sailed inside it and up the Stour to Canterbury, whose cathedral towers no doubt invited all of them who remembered the churches of Utrecht and Dorstad. Canterbury was stormed with great slaughter. And now the murderous fleet steered up the Thames for London. The English capital—say rather the future capital of England—had once already felt the brunt of their attack. London was a Mercian city, and on the approach of the Vikings the Mercian king Berhtwulf hastened down to defend it. He encountered the Danes in a pitched battle, was utterly defeated, and soon after died of the wounds he had received; the enemy spread north of the river, plundering and burning.

But they found a poorer country here than that they were used to in Wessex and in Kent; so they soon again crossed the Thames and came into Surrey. They were now in the territory of the West Saxon kings—the one dynasty, as it happened, which was destined to make a stand against their power, the dynasty under whom alone the English name was to find a refuge. Æthelwulf was upon the throne. He, following in the steps of his father, marched forward into Surrey and gave battle to the triumphant Rorik and his Danes at Aclea (Ockley—Oak-Lea), and gained a most signal victory. Æthel-

[1] *A. S. Chron.* s.a. [2] Ibid. 851.

wulf's son, Æthelbald, fought by his side. Never before had there been such a slaughter of heathens in England, so tell us the English chroniclers: and not English chroniclers only celebrate this victory, for the fame of it spread far.[1]

This may have been the end of Rorik's fleet. But there was nothing decisive in the victory so far as concerned the future history of the Danes in England. For though we read of other successes this year—one at Wembury, where Ealdorman Ceorl and the men of Devonshire slew many of the Vikings,[2] better still a *naval* victory gained by Æthelstan and Ealdorman Ealhere (taking nine ships and dispersing the rest), which ought to have been an encouraging phenomenon, not to England only but to Europe at large—with all these appearances of success we read of another event which in reality far outweighs them. This is the 'first wintering' of the Vikings upon English soil—namely, upon the island of Thanet.

It was a portentous event. In Ireland the first wintering of the Vikings had occurred fifteen or sixteen years before, in 835. It had been followed by the all-but conquest of the whole country. In Frisia the Danes had often wintered, and now found themselves quite at home there. But what with the large territories which had been assigned to the Dane Rorik, Frisia seemed to be slipping out of the feeble grasp of Lothair. In France the Danes wintered for the first time in A.D. 843.[3] Again, they were (as we saw just now) a year besieging Bordeaux, in 847–8. The first time we have any notice of their settling in winter quarters in the Seine country is in this same year, 851,[4] when they settled themselves in their new camp, *Givoldi fossa*, by the side of the Seine, and remained in the country 236 days, plundering far and wide.

We may, then, take the middle year of the ninth century, A.D. 850 or 851, as about the time at which the Danish Vikings cease to be, like the swallows, summer visitors only, but begin to pass whole years through in the enemy's territory.[5] This is

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 850.
[2] *A. S. Chron.* s.a.
[3] Ch. IX.
[4] Or 852, see *Chron. Fontan.* a.a.
[5] We say advisedly *Danish*. Ireland and Scotland being still on the whole reserved for the Norsemen; albeit it was precisely in this year or the next that a Danish fleet appeared in Irish waters.

the time when, as a natural consequence, the career of Viking becomes more and more a life occupation, and those who follow it become more and more separated in interests from their countrymen at home. Only five years ago the lands they visited for a momentary plundering raid were as strange to them as the Bjarmaland or Jötunheim of their mythic world. Now, as they grow familiar with the depths and shoals of all the great rivers of Europe, their own land begins to seem strange. Once or twice a Viking leader turned his ambition homewards and sought to make his arm felt in domestic disputes. But instances of this practice grow more rare as the century advances. The acts of the kings of Denmark become less and less interesting to the Christian chroniclers; in a few years their names even disappear altogether. On the other hand, the names of the Viking leaders become even more conspicuous. The new profession of *Sea-king* is coming into existence.

The safest fixed stations for the Vikings, whether for summer or winter, were still the islands close to the mainland, and they held one of these at the mouth of each of the largest rivers—except the Rhine, where they were perhaps too much at home to need such precaution. They held Walcheren, at the mouth of the Meuse and of the Scheld: though, to be quite exact, Walcheren was not in those days a complete island; still it was nearly enough so to be easily defended. At the mouth of the Seine they held the island of Oissel; but they were not afraid to trust themselves far inland in the *Givoldi fossa*. At the mouth of the Loire, or just south of it, they had the island of Noirmontiers. Finally, at the mouth of the Thames they had Thanet, and a few years later Sheppey.

For the every-day wants of these toilers of the sea all the neighbouring coasts would supply them with a sufficient harvest. What an expressive word is that peculiarly northern one *Strandhög*, strand-slaughter; meaning a raid from a Viking vessel upon the farms near the coast, the capture of sheep and cattle which were driven down to the strand and slaughtered there previously to being shipped and carried off. These

Strandhögs were now, we may fancy, going on along all the coasts of the Netherlands and France; fortunate for the people, wherever the slaughter the seafarers made was slaughter of cattle only.

This for their daily wants. But inland lay a boundless store of wealth in the cities and monasteries which stood scattered over all the plains of the Netherlands and all over *douce France*. The plunder of the holy places shocked the conscience of Christendom. What was worst for its material interests was the grip which the Vikings were taking of the veins along which flowed the life-blood of Christian commerce—of the Rhine which bore the soft-wares of Frisia, and the wines of Germany; of the Meuse, of the Seine, of the Loire, of the Thames; in an intermittent way of the Garonne. Well if these 'anarchists' had been content to take tax and toll of the goods which passed through their hands, instead of, by seizing all, stopping the very source of their own gains, killing the goose which laid the golden eggs. They did not thus refrain, and trade was already beginning to languish. We hear little more of Dorstad after the middle of the ninth century.

A.D. 851-2. To the tale of disaster belonging to these years we must add a very furious Viking attack upon Saxony. A fleet came sailing up the Elbe. They entered Saxony in 851 and renewed their invasion in 852. A whole district was laid waste, and thousands of Saxons met their death.[1]

III.

It was time for the rulers of Christendom, time especially for the lords of Frisia and of France, Lothair and Charles the Bald, to be doing something. Yet they had with difficulty been withheld during recent years from coming to blows over a variety of petty differences, and renewing the civil war. How far had Lewis winked at the raid which Rorik made on Lothair, and Lothair on the raid which Godfred made on Charles?

[1] *Ann Xanten.* 851, 852 (P. ii. 229).

We cannot tell. They pretended to regard the Vikings as the common enemy of Christendom. From time to time the three rulers met together to keep up the appearance of joint action in the government of the empire; first at Thionville (Diedenhofen),[1] 845, then at Meersen (847), whence they sent that threatening message to Horik, and a second time at the latter place (851).[2] Beyond that threat we read little of either separate or joint action against the Danes, whose cruelties were (says a chronicler) in these years past all belief or expression. Charles we saw did try and relieve Bordeaux, and gained one small success on the Garonne. He gained another against a troop of Vikings who had boldly ventured far inland and away from the protection of their fleet to ravage Beauvais. They, or a portion of their band, were caught by Charles's troops near the effluence of the Epte and cut to pieces. The one advantage which the Franks at present possessed was in the superiority of their cavalry over that of their invaders, who perhaps hardly as yet possessed this arm. It is to the credit of Charles the Bald that he appreciated the importance of cavalry in this warfare of raids and sallies, and made great efforts to improve his own. A.D. 851.

But this alone was not enough. Charles possessed a certain dogged perseverance. We see him throughout his long reign 'pegging away,' like Abraham Lincoln, to gain his ends, whatever they might be. He had the merit of never despairing of the Republic, great as the temptations to do so must have been. But he was, so far as we can judge, without military talents, and we are sometimes tempted to think him wanting in personal courage; sad would such an imputation be resting on a grandson of Charlemagne. Yet if we set down his refusal to join with Lothair in an attack on Godfred in 850 to distrust of his brother and not to fear, what are we to think of the sight which these very years display to us in another of

[1] Or more exactly at Juditz, near Diedenhofen.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* a. 851 (P. i. 445–6) gives a full list of the enactments of this 'Placitum magnum et generale' (*Chr. Font.*); see also P. *Leges*, ii. 407.

Charles the Bald's campaigns? Charles, as we know, had many things upon his hands beside the dreadful Viking onslaughts; none more pressing than the ever victorious revolt of Brittany, grown now so victorious and successful as to deserve to be called a revolt no longer, rather a war of independence. Nominoï who began it—the peasant prince who had accomplished so much during his reign—had himself crowned as independent Breton king in 849, and next tried to make his bishops as independent of the Frankish metropolitan as he would be of the Frankish king. In 851 he died.[1] But his son Erispoï was as brave and successful as the father.[2] In the autumn of 851 we find Charles marching to encounter the Bretons with a strong army in which were numbered not only his native Franks but a band of Saxon mercenaries, and in which served the bravest of the Frank noblesse, Count Vivianus of Tours. Yet when the armies met near Rennes, at the first assault the Saxon light infantry began to waver. The heavy Frankish horse could not cope with the swift darting cavalry of the Bretons.[3] Just as things were beginning to look critical the cry was suddenly raised, Where is the king? Charles had, in fact, taken himself off, and left his troops and his generals to get out of their difficulties as best they might. At once the battle changed into a *sauve qui peut.* Count Vivianus, we may guess, did what in him lay to rally his troops. When the flight and pursuit were over he was found dead upon the field of battle. But what a king was this to make head against the sea of troubles rolling in upon him from every side!

A.D. 852. Next year there was one more meeting of Charles and his eldest brother to concert, if possible, some joint action against the common foe. They determined on

[1] *Ann. Bert.*; *Chron. Fonten.* a.a.; *Reginon. Chron.* 862 (misdated).

[2] 'Respogius' *Bert.*; Nominoï's death is represented as a judgment for the destruction of churches of which he had been guilty; as related by Regino, it is precisely that of Felim I. of Munster; see Ch. VI.

[3] Regino gives a lengthy description of this battle, under date A.D. 860; if the account is trustworthy it lasted two days, and on the second Charles fled. Regino, who wrote A.D 892–908, is so confused in his dates that one cannot implicitly trust his facts.

attacking the Danes in their new-made fortified camp—Givold's Grave—in the Seine country. The Vikings were under the command of Godfred and of a new leader, Sidroc or Sihtric—the last destined to find a grave in England. Lothair brought his army from the north, Charles brought his from the west. But when the time for action came, Charles's courage once more deserted him, or he distrusted the good faith of his ally, or he thought he could not rely upon his own troops. And in the event, instead of a united attack from the kings of the Middle and Western kingdoms, the Danes received a heavy bribe from Charles to take their departure, which they did—for a time.[1] True indeed it is that, as our chronicler writes, 'the heathens more and more put the Christians to shame. But it is wretched to have to write these things.'[2] Wretched indeed! It is a mere catalogue of raids and plunderings, without distinctive features, without variety.

A.D. 853.

Yet one must not quite pass over a raid of the Loire Vikings in 853 for the sake of a place famous in the history of France, the greatest monastery, we may call it, of the Western kingdom, which now felt the weight of their attack. First the Vikings attacked Nantes; they penetrated thence deep into Poitou country; then late in the autumn they sailed far up the river Loire, which might almost now be called their river, till they reached the world-famous abbey of St. Martin of Tours.[3] Tours we might still call the monastic metropolis of France. It had, no doubt, lost something of the glory which surrounded it during Merovingian days, though it had of late won new titles to fame. In Merovingian days Tours had been almost an *umbilicus orbis*, the navel at least of the northern Christian world, the Rome of Christendom north of the Alps. The once famous, now forgotten, church of Whithern or Casa Candida, in Strathclyde Britain—a church which treated on equal terms with Columba's Church in Scotland—was a daughter foundation to St.

[1] *Ann. Bert.*; *Chron. Font.* 852 (P. ii. 303). [2] *Ann. Xant.* s.a. 849.
[3] *Ann. Bert.* a.a.; *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; *Ann. Xanten.* 854; Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, ii. 250.

Martin's of Tours, and took its name therefrom. Of the status of St. Martin's in France there is the less need to say much, because the name of the great historian of the Merovingians is indissolubly united with it, and his history never lets us forget the glory of his patron. There were at this moment two monasteries of St. Martin at Tours, one within the city, the other, the older, without the walls, at Marmoutiers. Of recent years Tours, though no longer ecclesiastically so great as of old, had been illustrated by the presence within her abbey of our famous Alcuin, the most learned of all the divines and statesmen in the kingdom of Charles the Great; and among his pupils there he had numbered Raban (Hraban—the Raven), the present Archbishop of Mainz, perhaps the worthiest living successor to Alcuin in all the Frankish Empire. Unhappy that neither the sacred nor the literary associations of Tours were likely to make impression upon the plunderers who were now nearing its walls; nor were those walls, strong though they were, able to withstand their fury. And if there yet remained any Frenchman who looked upon the Viking terror with indifference, he could hardly do so after this fresh sacrilege.

We may well believe that public opinion in the kingdoms both of Lothair and Charles cried out loudly for some decisive action. The differences which still kept apart the two brothers were composed at a meeting at Valenciennes;[1] and at another meeting at Liège[2] the question of joint action against the enemy was once more discussed. Might not something be hoped for? But Lothair had the experiences of two previous attempts to warn him against expecting much result from these plans, and as a fact he seems almost immediately to have wearied of his alliance with Charles, and once more to have entered into negotiations with Lewis the German.[3]

A.D. 853–4.

[1] Pertz, *Leg.* i. 422.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* a.a. 854. Charles's union with Lothair resulted from his fear of Lewis, who was intriguing with the discontented nobles of West Francia and Aquitaine. (See below). Charles, on his side, bribed the King of the Bulgars to invade Lewis's territory (*Ann. Bert.* 853.).

[3] *Bert.* 854.

However, this was almost the last effort which Lothair was to make against the Danes or any one else. His power as a friend or as an enemy was over. He who with such vaulting ambitions had come fifteen years ago out of Italy when the news of Lewis the Pious' death was brought to him, had long found out the vanity of human wishes and the heavy burden of power. Of half his rule he had been stripped while he still reigned. After he left Italy fifteen years ago he had never returned to it. His son Lewis had, with the help of the Pope, very soon contrived to edge him out of all power there. Truth to tell, Italy, with her separate interests and her separate dangers—with a terrible cloud of Saracen invaders hanging on her skirts—required and deserved a king living in her midst. The policy of the popes in these days was, we have already said, a national policy, a policy of Italy for the Italians. As Gregory had supported Lothair against his father, so did Gregory's successor, Sergius, support Lothair's son Lewis against him; and this Lewis, a valiant and capable prince, had long been the undisputed king of Italy. A.D. 855.

Now even of the rest of his empire Lothair had grown weary. We know not what remorse of conscience may have devoured him. Howbeit, he now resigned his territories north of the Alps into the hands of his second son, Lothair, and he himself took the tonsure and retired into the monastery of Prüm—the very place to which in his past days of rebellion he had once consigned his youngest brother Charles.[1] There, a few weeks later, he died.

When, after some disputes, the division of the kingdom of Lothair was finally settled, and his second son succeeded him in the northern part of his territory—which included Frisia—there was again talk of an alliance between the kings of the threatened districts.

Meantime, in the same years, a change had been taking place in the internal politics of Denmark, which, if it produced no great effect upon the history of the Vikings in Europe, is at

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 855, &c, (P. i. 449).

least memorable as almost the last time in this century that the internal history of Denmark receives any notice from the Christian chroniclers.

IV.

The reason of this fact has been already pointed out. That change was taking place in the position of the Viking wanderers which we described in a former chapter, the change from the position of the despised youngest son of the Folk-tale to the glorious hero of romance. The Vikings were no longer the exiled younger brothers of the Danish race. It was on them now, and not on the Danes of the Fatherland, that the thoughts of men dwelt. The fame of their achievements abroad perhaps made their brethren impatient at home. A little time ago the Viking expeditions had set out under the patronage of the Danish king. Now the pirate leaders had won homes for themselves in the midst of rich Christendom; not yet territories (save in Frisia), but well-guarded seats and, as it were, watch-towers, from which they could overlook the enemies' lands. The more warlike spirits at home looked with small favour upon the new career which Horik had marked out for himself, since he ceased to give countenance to the Vikings. They did not care for the peaceful road to wealth that he was opening out for them by his intercourse with the Christians, with Anscar, with the merchants to whom he threw open the mart at Sleswick. Wherefore an opposition party grew up in Denmark, at the head of which were two nephews of Horik, Harald and Guthorm. Some would have this Guthorm to be the Viking leader who in after-years won the kingdom of East Anglia from Ælfred the Great. But there is nothing beyond the name to identify the two. It is more probable that Guthorm perished in the battle which presently ensued. Horik was compelled to make a partition of his kingdom with those leaders of the opposition.

A.D. 854.

It may have been through their influence that in the years 851 and 852 the great plundering expedition was organized to

sail up the Elbe, whereof mention has been already made. The rival powers in Denmark remained in a jealous equipoise for some years, but in 854 the flames of civil war broke out in full fury.[1] Finally a great battle was fought, lasting three days—comparable in duration to that mighty combat in which Spain was lost by the Goths. Almost all the royal house, it is said, almost all the nobility of Denmark perished—among them Horik himself, and probably both his rivals Harald and Guthorm. Only a boy was found to represent the blood-royal, and he was raised to the throne under the name of Horik II. He may have been grandson to the first Horik. While his guardians remained in power they headed a party opposed to any friendship with Lewis the German or his subjects. The church in Sleswick was pulled down. But later on Horik II. began, in his turn, to make friends with Archbishop Anscar, and to the Christians in Sleswick were restored their old liberties.

Some of the Viking leaders were attracted by the rumours of the civil war at home. In 851, when the opposition party first sprang into existence there, Rorik left his Frisian lands, in which he had only just been settled by Lothair the emperor, for Denmark, with the hope of fishing in those troubled waters. But he got no good from that visit. Afterwards he and Godfred returned again to Denmark, but came too late to take any part in the great battle, or to put in any effective claim to the throne.[2] They were of the blood-royal, of one branch of it, as we remember. For it was the Horik who had just fallen who, thirty years earlier, ousted Harald, the brother or uncle of Rorik and the father of Godfred, from the throne of Denmark. And certainly their achievements against the subjects of Lothair and Charles the Bald might be thought to entitle these Viking leaders to the suffrages of their countrymen. But though the Vikings excited admiration at a distance, it may have been found that

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; *Vita. Anscar.* c. 31. Rimbert speaks of Horik being attacked by pirates. We may perhaps read for this the 'Viking party.' But see below.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* 855.

they were too strange to the every-day politics of their country, too little 'in touch' with it, as we should say, to be able on the spot to win a sufficient body of adherents. Rorik, however, after a third return to Denmark, did finally compel Horik II. to assign him a large strip of territory lying between the Eyder and the sea.[1]

Many other Viking leaders and followers were probably attracted to Denmark by the civil war, for in 854–5 there was a pause in the violence of the Northmen's attacks in France.[2]

A.D. 854–5.

Internal affairs, too, more especially in West Francia, the kingdom of Charles the Bald, were going somewhat better for the king. Pippin of Aquitaine had fallen into Charles's hands, and had been compelled to take the monastic habit.[3] He had, moreover, sunk more and more into drunken, disreputable ways.[4] The day was to come, a year or two hence, when he would, breaking his vow, openly enlist himself on the side of the Vikings and, so rumour said, forswear his Christianity as those renegades the Gaill-Gædhil were doing in Ireland. The sentiment of the Frankish Empire was not yet prepared to tolerate such conduct.

To set against Pippin's loss of credit, however, one event happened in the year 854, not so important in itself as ominous of future evil. The malcontent Aquitanians, losing faith in their champion, Pippin, began to look elsewhere for a leader; they began to besiege the ear of Lewis the German, and Lewis, unhappily, to pay some attention to their complaints. Lewis had hitherto, of all the three parties to the partition of Verdun, been the most zealous for the maintenance of its provisions. That he should now be lending an ear to those who sought to induce him to invade Charles's territory was ominous indeed.

One can imagine excuses enough for those who were eager

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* 857.

[2] *Ann. Xant.* (Pertz, ii. 30) says in 856: '*Et Dani iterum resumptis viribus*,' &c.

[3] *Bert.* 852 (P. i. 447); Regino, 853 (P. i. 569).

[4] Like his father. See Regino, *l.c.*

to be rid of Charles's rule and those who listened to their proposals. The battle with the Bretons near Rennes, that other sad fiasco by the grave of Givoldus—these were of evil prophecy for the future years of Charles's rule. And had not Charles intrigued with Lewis's own enemies, the Bulgars? But then the malcontent Aquitanians were not in reality thinking about the protection of their country against the Vikings. We shall see a few years hence a horrible and humiliating example of their indifference on that head. They were possessed only with a wild longing for independence at any price. It had become a mad *idée fixe* with them, for which they were prepared to sacrifice everything. But that Lewis the German should have lent them any encouragement—this was the sad and shameful fact. He did so. He would not indeed mix in the matter himself — would not yet. But he allowed his second son, his *æquivocus*, whom our histories call (without much reason) Lewis the Saxon—he allowed him to gather an army and attempt the invasion of Aquitaine.[1] It was little more than an attempt. Charles may not have commanded much respect, but this new boy commanded none. Pippin, moreover, escaped (was allowed to escape) from his cloister and set up his own claims; so that he, as it were, divided the opposition party. Lewis got no following; and on the approach of his uncle he had to retire once more within his father's territory—his invasion a mere bubble, had it not been the forerunner of something much worse. Next year, to gratify as far as possible the Aquitanian cry for autonomy, Charles the Bald made his son and *his æquivocus*, a younger Charles, independent or quasi-independent king of the country. About this time, too, the truce with the King of Brittany—king we may fairly call him—which had been wrung from Charles by Erispoi, was confirmed into a more durable peace. True it was gained at the expense of all for which the King of the West Franks had been contending. But with fresh clouds gathering outside, peace at any price was worth obtaining at home.

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* 854 (P. i. 368–9); *Bert.* (P. i. 448).

V.

Towards the end of the year 855 the Viking fleets came sweeping upon the coast of France once more.
A.D. 855–6. Sihtric was here again: Sihtric was in the Loire, where Orleans again felt the Viking fury;[1] he was in the Seine. And with him now was associated a new leader, a leader famous in tradition, Björn Ironside, the son (*si vera fama*) of Ragnar Lodbrok. Sihtric and Björn stood in command over a body of Vikings who were ravaging far and near in the country of the Seine up to Pitres. Charles encountered them at La Perche, and there gained a signal victory. Sihtric left the Seine and sailed for the Loire. Björn retreated, and entrenched himself at *Givoldi fossa*. But next year a still stronger fleet came again up the Seine. Charles—where was he? This time the Vikings met with no opposition, or only the shadow of one. No monastery or town which did not feel the weight of their attack. At last, burning and plundering on every side, they sailed their slow course up the
December, A.D. 856. river, and in mid-winter of 856–7 they made the second Viking attack on Paris.[2] (The second Viking attack on London had fallen, as we note, five years earlier. The *first* Viking attack on London had preceded the first on Paris by three or, maybe, four years.) No miraculous arm was stretched forth this time to protect the city; such immunity as it gained it owed to the earthly weapon of a heavy ransom. For the sake of this the Vikings consented to spare most of the churches. But the church of St. Peter and St. Paul was devoured by flames. There lay the relics of St. Geneviève, who by her miraculous powers had *almost* converted a heathen barbarian of the earlier invasion — Childeric, the father of Clovis. The church where she lay occupied the site where now stands the Pantheon. In the Loire the devastations were as terrible as on the Seine. Tours was attacked a second time. From Tours the Vikings ravaged as far as Blois.[3]

A cry of fear and anguish arose from these lands of Western

[1] *Ann. Bert.* in P. i. 449–451. [2] Ibid. 857. [3] Ibid.

France. Scarcely a town (as we have said—they are the very words of a chronicler[1]), scarcely a monastery, remained untouched. 'All men give themselves to flight. No one cries out, *Stand and fight for your fatherland, for your church, for your countrymen.* What they ought to defend with arms they shamefully redeem by payments. The commonweal of Christendom is betrayed by its guardians.'

Such was the state of affairs in France. In Frisia it was different, but scarcely less disastrous. The year 855, the year of Lothair's death, is the one in which the Vikings may be said to have established themselves in Frisia on a permanent footing. Henceforth the rulers of Lotharingia seem pretty well to have abandoned the idea of driving them forth again. A.D. 855.

But perhaps Lothair II. had not really abandoned the idea; only that unaided he was not equal to the task. If he and Charles could act in concert—— So the treaty of offence and defence which his father had made was renewed. Charles, in virtue of a curious power he seems to have possessed of twisting people round to his own views, procured that, as on the occasion of the other joint attack, this should first be directed against Vikings in his own territory. The Seine Vikings were again chosen. After their great expedition ending with the second siege of Paris they had returned down the river and settled themselves on their fortified island of Oissel. There Charles was determined to besiege them. He spared no efforts to make the attack a decisive one. And had it succeeded, the whole history of Viking invasion in the century might have been altered.

Charles prepared not only an army, but, what was still too rare a thing in the Frankish armaments, a fleet. No such large one had been seen before. Both sea and land force was set in motion for the mouth of the Seine in July, 858.[2] The younger Charles, King of Aquitaine, marched A.D. 858.

[1] *Traslat. S. Philiberti*, ii. (Mab. A.SS. Sæc. iv. 556).

[2] *Ann. Bert.* a.a.; *Vita S. Pharonis* (Mab. A.SS. Sæc. ii. 624).

up with a contingent of his own, and Lothair joined the army in August. There lay the Vikings, shut in tightly in their Oissel fastness. But the place could not be taken by assault. One does not hear that the Franks even tried; perhaps they had grown to fear too much the Viking fortifications or even their 'shield-burg.' So they had to resort to the tedious operations of a blockade, which might give who knows how many openings to an evil fate. And an evil fate unhappily stood at the back of Charles the Bald and his preparations, and was even then at work.

At first all went well. The Seine Danes found themselves unable to break through the blockade. No friendly sails appeared on the horizon. They had never been over-provident against the evil day, and provisions soon began to run short. The siege had endured some twelve weeks: it was not possible for them to hold out much longer.

But now Charles's ill-fortune stepped in in the shape of the malcontent nobles of his kingdom—Franks this time as well as Aquitanians. While he had been gathering his army and fleet they had been opening communications with Lewis.[1] And this shows how little honesty there was in their protests that they were only looking for a fit defender for their country, and to how low an ebb their patriotism had sunk. Charles was, at all events, more worthy than these unworthy vassals. But Lewis unhappily listened once more to their proposals, which a certain Count Otto and Abbot Adalbert of St. Bertin brought to him. He could scarcely be expected duly to weigh the worth of the negotiators. The nobles painted the tyranny of Charles in the blackest colours; they protested that if Lewis could not help them they must throw themselves upon an alliance with the Danes.[2] Such a threat might have given the measure of their honesty. But it was perhaps chosen to give Lewis a specious pretext for intervening.

To do so must have been against his conscience. Moreover at that moment every familiar call of duty required his presence

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* a.a.; *Ann. Bert. l.c.* Regino, a.a. 860 (his dates being wrong as usual).

[2] *Ann. Fuld. l.c.*

elsewhere than in the midst of the disputes between Charles and his subjects. For the never more than half smothered rebellion of his Slav tributaries had broken out into flame, and the German king was this moment in the act of arming a triple expedition—against Rastislas, the Duke of Moravia, against the Sorbs in the middle district, and the Abodriti in the north.[1] Perhaps the very existence of this ready prepared army doubled the temptation to Lewis; Charles engaged far away in the west, the whole road lay open. After, we gather, paying his conscience the tribute of some reluctance,[2] Lewis decided to cast the die. In August, 858, he crossed the frontier and received the homagings of a great number of the Frankish and Aquitanian nobility, but of only one ecclesiastic of the highest rank, Wenilo, the Archbishop of Sens.

Thereupon Charles the Bald had to raise the siege of Oissel, which he had nearly brought to a successful conclusion; and when all their hopes had fled the Norsemen saw themselves once more left free.

Charles on his side marched to encounter Lewis, and the two armies came face to face at Brienne.[3]

Both were apparently drawn up and ready to do battle; but Charles had no serious thoughts of fighting. Either his nerve failed him or he knew that his generals had been tampered with.[4] After three days of negotiations, leaving his troops in line, he secretly decamped and made for Burgundy,[5] where he expected to find a strong support. Lewis marched forward, and all West Francia seemed to lie at his feet.

But though the thanes fell from Charles, the ecclesiastics, all save Wenilo, stood by their anointed king. They held a synod at Quiersey under the presidency of Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, and head, as we might call him, of the Gallican Church.[6] Under the influence of that great and undaunted man, the bishops and abbots at Quiersey drew up a letter of remonstrance and reproof, addressed to the victorious Lewis,

[1] *Ann. Fuld. l.c.* [2] Ibid. [3] *Ann. Bert. l.c.; Ann. Fuld. l.c.*
[4] *Ann. Bert.* [5] Aquitaine, according to Regino, s.a. 866.
[6] Hincmar, *Op.* ii. 125 *sq.*

which has a fine ring of courageous sincerity amid the treacheries and weaknesses of the time. They did not, however, absolutely refuse to acknowledge Lewis as their king. But before they would do so he must obtain the abdication of Charles the Bald.

And in the event this invasion came to no more than the invasion by Lewis the Saxon. Some of the nobility who had been the first to welcome Lewis into the western kingdom, and were the most trusted by him, began to intrigue for the return of their old king.[1] Among these was Count Conrad the Welf, the nephew of Judith the empress, and of Emma, the wife of Lewis the German; who, as a relative both of Charles and of his rival, might not unnaturally hesitate to whose side he should attach himself. He and his brother Hugo—whom we shall often hear of again—had been the foremost in bringing over the German king; they were now the foremost in bringing back Charles. We can never understand the military movements of those days, either as between rival Christian princes, or between the Christian troops and the better-organized Northmen, unless we bear in mind how temporary and militia-like was the tie of service which kept together the individuals of the Christian armies; how every *ban* or *band* had a claim when its work was done to be *dis*banded, in order that the private soldier might return to his plough, the great lord to his villa or his castle. This is what happened now. Conrad and Hugh persuaded Lewis to disband his troops, knowing all the time, from their secret communications with Charles the Bald, that he had collected a fresh army in Burgundy. So that on the appearance of the latter at the head of his levies, the tables were again turned. Lewis was now as little capable of making head against Charles, as Charles had thought himself incapable of confronting his brother at Brienne. At the same time the news of hostile movements on the part of the Sorbs on his eastern frontier—the Sorbs against whom his army raised the year

[1] *Ann. Fuld. l.c.; Ann. Bert.* 859 (P. i. 453); Hincmar, *l.c.* ii. 145-158; Regino *l.c.* Regino's account shows that the opinion of the clerical body was against Lewis.

before ought to have been turned—gave Lewis an excuse for returning once more from West Francia into his own territory.

VI.

Charles in this wise recovered his kingdom. But his great effort against the Danes in Oissel had broken down—his last serious effort, as it proved, to rid his country altogether of this new evil. Had this one great camp been taken, and the defenders driven from the country, or, still better, had the Vikings been destroyed, it would have been an encouragement to the Christians all over Europe, and a like discouragement to the invaders. There is a curious parallelism in the history of the Vikings on the Continent and those in England just at this time. Four or five years before Charles' expedition against Oissel, the English *fyrd* of Surrey and Kent had been gathered together for a strong attack upon the camp of the Danes in Thanet.[1] They were under the command of their Ealdormen Huda and Ealhere. The English did not confine themselves to blockading. They assaulted the Danish camp with desperate courage. But the Danes held out with a still more stubborn resistance. When charge after charge had been made, and many had fallen on both sides, the English were obliged to withdraw. The English accounts speak of it as a drawn battle. But if the Danes kept hold, as they did, of their fortified camp, this was everything to them. Two years later they removed their camp from Thanet to Sheppey,[2] a little higher up the river—that is to say, a little nearer to London. They were now (as appears) under the command of three leaders who were to be famous in the annals of the Danes in England—Ingvar (Ivar), Ubbe, and Halfdan. They are called the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok. It was about the same time that their brother Björn began to be active in France.

A.D. 853-4.

A.D. 855 or 856.

But had the siege of Oissel succeeded, had the Danes been compelled to surrender, and had Charles (a doubtful hope, I

[1] *A. S. Chron.* s.a.

[2] Ibid. 855.

own) had the courage to mete out to them the full penalty they deserved, then one cannot but think that everywhere the Christians would have been spurred to fresh efforts. The united Frankish armies might have marched next upon the Vikings in Frisia, or those upon the Loire, and, encouraged by the memory of their recent triumph, they would have had every hope of success in either expedition. Then no doubt the English would have been roused to still greater efforts, and the plague might have been stayed for ever.

For, after all, it was still in the early stage: it had not yet lasted more than twenty years upon the Continent. We cannot date the serious beginning of the Viking attacks upon the Frankish Empire before the death of Lewis the Pious, and Lewis had yet been dead only eighteen years. Of isolated attacks from Denmark I am not speaking; but of the rise of what may be called a new Scandinavian nation devoted to the Viking life, and drawing all its sustenance from foreign countries. It is the growth of this new nationality—a nation of freebooters—which marks the culmination, or, if you prefer it, the true beginning of the Viking Age.

Of course this is only what might have happened, and under the most hopeful view. It is at least as likely that the Vikings, even if they had been driven from the Continent, would only have turned with still greater fury to England, and the disasters which followed the coming of the Great Army (of which we have to speak hereafter) might have been anticipated and surpassed. In our country, as abroad, the Vikings had only begun to fasten upon the land after a series of desultory attacks. And it is well indeed for us that these early attacks and settlements did not sooner take the character of a great invasion. For a certain *ætheling* of England, son of the reigning King Æthelwulf, who, more than any other prince of the century, was the champion of Christendom against the heathen, had yet only attained his tenth year. Ten years later when the Great Invasion did fall upon England, it would find this prince girt with his sword, ready to stand by the side of his brother, the king, in every battle and every siege. Young as he was, the

ætheling Ælfred had already made one or perhaps two journeys to Rome. On the first visit he had been anointed by Pope Leo IV., and received by him as his son. On the second visit, in 855–6, he had accompanied his father Æthelwulf, and stayed for a while at the Court of Charles the Bald. Æthelwulf, who was a widower of forty, became an aspirant for the hand of Charles's daughter, Judith, a girl of only fifteen; he married her on his return journey with great ceremony at Rheims, giving his sons a stepmother and the English people a 'French Madame' for queen, with which neither were well content. But this alliance of the two crowns of West Francia and West Saxondom (West-Saex), at the time when both countries were suffering such like treatment at the hands of the Danes is memorable.

Once more: whatever success the Oissel attack had had, it could not have altered the condition of affairs further west, where the Irish Sea coast was now parcelled out among the various Viking settlements, and all the country, Irish as well as Norse or Danish, was in some sense under the rule of a king from Norway, Olaf the White; nor in the countless other Norse settlements in the west and north of Scotland. Ireland and Scotland were for many years left exclusively in the hands of the Vikings from Norway, but in 852 some Danes appeared upon the scene in Ireland in a fashion which we shall describe elsewhere. And by this time Norse and Danes alike were united into a sort of *Imperium in imperio*, occupying the coast settlements in Ireland and ruled over by King Olaf the White.

But it is time to cease speculations on what might have happened if the Oissel siege had had a different result, and to turn our attention upon the actual state of things in this year of grace, 859, as Charles was settling in his recovered kingdom, and the Danish Scalds, no doubt, were singing in the winter camps upon the Seine or the Loire the triumph of their arms over the Christians.

CHAPTER XI.

DECAY AND REDINTEGRATION.

A.D. 859–866.

I.

TIME, we see, had been slowly passing on, as the empire grew weaker day by day and the misery of the people increased; and it now marked seventy years since the first Viking keel had touched on English ground, sixty-six since the great attack upon Northumbria first roused the attention of Europe and notified to all men that a new era of history had begun. A generation had not passed since continuous Viking attacks first began to fall heavily upon the states of the Continent. But, in these four-and-twenty years or so, men had had time to drink almost to the dregs the cup of sorrow and humiliation which the heathen had prepared for them. Now, no doubt, began to rise up in half the churches of Francia that despairing petition, *Libera nos a furore Normannorum*: 'From the Northmen's fury Good Lord deliver us,' which, in some churches, survived quite into modern days. Can anything better express the terror out of which it grew, than the thought of that prayer, continuing to be sent up through all those sumless days, for deliverance from a danger so long past?

Was it possible for Christendom to sink much lower than it

had done now, or for the monarchs of the empire to give further proof of their incapacity for defending their subjects against their new oppressors, or evidence of a more fatal disunion among themselves? And there must have been many alive who could remember the glorious day when Charles the Great returned to Aix wearing the diadem of the Cæsars. They could remember still better the rage and yet contempt with which the Franks had heard of the fleet which Godfred dared to hurl against an outlying portion of the empire; and Charlemagne's angry complaint against Providence, that he had not been allowed to try the strength of his arm against those monkeys.

Yet here were all their defences broken down, and in the lands of the Franks and Germans there was an empire no more. Some fiction of such a state had been kept up until four years ago, when Lothair died. But now it had to be finally abandoned; for the only crowned emperor now was Lewis II.—Lewis, the King of Italy, about whom no one north of the Alps thought or cared—a Frankish emperor with no Franks to rule.

This was a change in the whole state of Christendom; and if it had no direct bearing upon the doings of the Vikings, it had certainly a moral significance in the history of Europe, and it was a stage which we must notice in the decay of the house of Charlemagne. We know how much the bringing about this state of things had always lain at the hearts of the popes.

Years ago, when Pope Gregory died—Gregory of the Lügenfeld—and Sergius was elected his successor by the Romans, the new pope had taken his seat upon the chair of St. Peter without any reference to the assent of the emperor. Lothair I., who had then been emperor but four years, sent word to his son Lewis, his viceroy in Italy, to collect an army and march upon Rome, and to exact punishment for this contempt. Lewis did so; his troops invaded the papal territories, burning and plundering as they passed, until a terrible thunderstorm which overtook them frightened

A.D. 844.

the consciences of some, and reminded them that they were treading upon holy ground. They approached the Sacred City in more decorous fashion. The pope, wisely blind to the injuries which his servants and his territories had suffered, came forward to greet the young king, and received him with imperial honours. At the door of St. Peter's, however, he refused Lewis entrance to the fane till he had given his oath that he intended no injury to the chair of Peter or to the Roman State. And Lewis swore to protect both. This oath grew presently into a compact between the young Italian king and the pope, to the exclusion of the claims of the emperor. Sergius crowned Lewis King of Italy, and thus gave him a title independent of his father's choice; and Lewis confirmed the election of Sergius without reference to the wishes of his father, who was by these means practically ousted from all future influence over the government of Italy.[1]

While the bringing about of this separation between Italy and the empire north of the Alps was, as we have said, the unfailing policy of the popes, we cannot count their aims either unnatural or unjust, seeing all the special dangers which threatened the peninsula, in which the transalpine lands had no share. It was a policy which, for the time, suited well the interests of young Lewis. But, on his side, it was a short-sighted policy, mortgaging the power of the imperial crown in order to enjoy some of its pleasures while his father lived. When, eleven years later, Lothair retired to the monastery at Prüm, or when, one month after, he died, Lewis felt the ill effects of what he had done. He had kept Italy to himself, but he had also kept himself to Italy. His father could revenge the slight of 844 when in 855 he handed over the rule of the northern countries to Lothair, his second son. And when the emperor died, Lewis found it in vain to put forward his claims to some part of the territories his father had ruled north of the Alps. The two uncles, Lewis the German and

[1] *Gesta Pont. Rom.* (Bianchini, i. 349 *sq.*); *Ann. Bert.* a.a. 844 (P. i. 440) The latter says nothing about the hostile attitude of Lewis at first.

Charles the Bald, sided with Lothair; and, at the partition of Orbe, Lewis was formally excluded from any part in the government of northern Christendom. A.D. 856.

In this wise Francia entered upon a distinct stage in the course of its decay. Now a still more serious downward step had been taken in the revival of the civil war by Lewis in 858, teaching a memorable lesson of the overweening influence of personal ambition upon the policy of these sons of Lewis the Pious, above any care they had for their own states or the welfare of Christendom. For Lewis, we remember, had, at the moment of invading Charles's kingdom, laid aside the schemes (legitimate schemes they would be deemed in that day) which he had been maturing to rivet again the yoke of the Franks upon his eastern neighbours the Slavs.[1] It might seem a judgment that from this time to the end of his long reign that yoke was never more maintained by Lewis.[2] The wars with the Slavs henceforth never died down. At the head of the hostile confederation stood the Moravian Duke Rastislas. He was defeated from time to time, often his territory was wasted; but his submission was never won. For many years Rastislas kept alight the fire of revolt; when he died, his successor, his nephew, Suatopluk or Zwentibold, though he had allied himself with the Franks against Rastislas, and though for a moment he seemed to submit to their dictation, soon returned to his uncle's ambitious dreams and became unconquerable and independent as Rastislas had been. A.D. 870.

We note, too, as another mark of decadence, the new partition of the empire, by the division of all the land, once ruled over by Lothair the Emperor, among his three sons, Lewis, Lothair, and Charles; the diminution or partition of the kingdom of Charles the Bald, by the introduction of home rule into Aquitaine, and by the total independence of Brittany.

[1] Gfrörer holds that the assembly of an army against the Slavs was only a pretence, *O. u. W. Fr. Carol.* i. 269.

[2] It was *to a certain extent* restored after A.D. 862. The years 855-862 may be reckoned those of the complete independence of Moravia. See Gfrörer *o.c.* pp. 197, 450.

Even the Eastern kingdom felt the touch of the same centrifugal forces. Lewis the German, had to taste of the dish which he had helped to prepare for his father. He, in his turn, experienced the turbulence and insubordination of his own sons. His strong hand held them down and prevented the outbreak of civil war; but their mutual jealousies—chiefly the jealousy of the second son Lewis of the first-born Carloman—were always smouldering, and once or twice during their father's lifetime they burst into flame.

Add to all these internal sources of weakness the fresh spirit that was put into the Northmen by the breakdown of the Oissel siege. Everywhere there was depression among the Christians and exaltation among the Vikings. Fresh fleets poured upon the Frankish coasts; lesser rivers like the Scheld and the Somme began to receive their colonies of Vikings, not less than the greater ones, the Rhine and the Seine and the Loire.

The two high contracting parties in the alliance which had led to the Oissel siege drew off, each on his own business, really giving up in their thoughts the notion of any great efforts in the future against the Danes. The second Lothair, who was a feeble edition of his father, soon became involved in a matrimonial difficulty, the *cause celèbre* of those days, which lay very near his heart, which was much more to him than all his kingly duties; and, indeed, all Europe was agape about the matter, as if it had nothing more serious to concern itself with than the question of the legality of a royal marriage. Could not Hincmar, the greatest ecclesiastic of his day north of the Alps, the guiding spirit in the policy of Charles the Bald, find subject more pressing to the interests of his countrymen than to discuss whether Lothair was rightly married to his wife, Thietberga, or no; or what means were to be taken to force him to give up his mistress, Waldrada, and take back his lawful spouse? Could Hincmar have looked forward another quarter of a century and seen the Viking armies encamped round his own beloved Rheims, himself, an archbishop old and grey, fleeing before them by night—could he have seen these sights,

would he not have thought there were matters more weighty than even a royal divorce suit? Yet there were things not less terrible being enacted before his eyes, though neither he nor Rheims were yet the sufferers. Had not one body of Vikings, the very year of the Oissel siege, come to Bayeux and slain its bishop, Bishop Baltfrid? and at the beginning of 859 killed another bishop, Erminfrid of Beauvais, and carried off Immo, Bishop of Noyon, a prisoner?[1] A.D. 859.

Charles, not less than Lothair, seems to have abandoned the thought of driving the Vikings away by steady open war; though he did not, like his nephew, sit down and do nothing, or concern himself only with domestic affairs. Yet, if the Vikings were too strong to be openly attacked, what other resource was there? For one answer to the question let us turn aside for a moment from the Frankish embroilments, and look far away over to the Western Island, which we have lost sight of so long; not, indeed, for the sake of taking up the continuous history of the Vikings in Ireland again—for the history is at once too monotonous and meagre to be unfolded in detail—but only to witness one event which happens to stand out of these barren chronicles like an oasis of graphic and realizable description.

II.

It was in 851. What the Gaill had been doing in Ireland up to 851 we have, perhaps, by this time nearly forgotten. It was 'the fifth year of Malachy,' for one thing—Malachy whom, if we remember anything, we recall as the slayer of Thorgisl in 845, and the year after raised to the Ard-Ri-ship, or throne of all Ireland, as Malachy I. Malachy had now been Ard-Ri for four or five years, when, one summer's morning of 851, the 'sea-ward' of the Vikings in Dublin, looking out to sea, beheld a great fleet hanging in the clouds. The Norsemen were filled with panic (it is an Irish chronicler who writes).[2] Some, however, said that the A.D. 851.

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 859.

[2] O'Donovan, *Three Fragments* [copied from ancient sources by

fleet was a fleet of Norsemen who were coming to their aid; but others, who had more knowledge, said that these ships were the ships of the Daunites, or Danes, who were coming to rob and plunder them; and this was in fact the truth.

It is a new departure in Viking history, this turning of the arms of one nation of sea-rovers against those of another, instead of fleshing them upon the common Christian enemy—the *corpus vile* of the Christian peasant or monk.

The chronicler goes on to tell us how the Dublin Norsemen sent a very swift-sailing vessel towards the approaching fleet. And, amid the barrenness of all Viking records, it is not, I own, without keen pleasure that I watch that single vessel scudding and tacking on its momentous errand, watched eagerly over the Dublin Bay, while the threatening 'Daunite' fleet grows larger and larger to view. At last the swift vessel has come up to the foremost of the new fleet and the two ships meet 'face to face.' The helmsman [1] of the Norseman addressed the helmsman of the Dane in words not much different from those which of old time were spoken by Polyphemus to the wandering Odysseus, and his comrades. 'Ye, oh! men, from what country are ye come upon the sea? Come ye for peace or for war?' [2] But the only answer which the Dane vouchsafed was to let fly a shower of arrows. The crews of the two ships at once engaged; and the crew of the Danish ship overcame the crew of the Norseman, and the Danes slew the crew of the Norse ship. The Danish fleet then all together made for the place where lay the Norwegian ships and ran towards the shore. A fierce battle was fought. The Danes slew thrice their own number of Norsemen and they cut off the heads of all they slew. The Danes then convoyed the ships of the Norsemen along to a

McFirbisigh], from which the whole of the following account is taken. For confirmation, however, cf. *Chron. Scot.*; *F. M.* 850; *Gaill.* xx.; *Ult.* 850–1. On the superiority of Danes over other Scandinavians, cf. *Ann. Xant.*

[1] The Norse word *stiurusman* is used by the Irish chronicler. He was not merely the helmsman but the captain of the ship.

[2] Ὦ ξεῖνοι τίνες ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθ' ὑγρὰ κέλευθα;
ἦ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἢ μαψιδίως ἀλάλησθε,
οἵα τε λῃστῆρες ὑπεὶρ ἅλα; . . .

fort; and they took the women and the gold and all the property of the Norsemen with them. 'And thus,' concludes our chronicler, 'the Lord took away from the Norsemen all the wealth that they had stolen from the churches and the sanctuaries and the shrines of the saints of Erin!'

But two Norse chiefs—Stein and Jargna were their names—on intelligence of the defeat of the Dublin Vikings set about great preparations for revenge. They made a great hosting from every quarter against the Danes, and came at last with a fleet of seventy sail to beat them up in Carlingford Bay where they were stationed. The Danish fleet was much smaller, not comparable, therefore, to some of the great fleets which we have seen hurled against the shores of France or England.

All day it seems the two fleets fought, the Norsemen and the Danes; and there had never been seen before so great a slaughter at sea as took place between them. But victory turned against the Danes. They were cut off from their supplies of food, and were like to perish of hunger.

Then their leader, Horm,[1] made them a long speech, which the chronicler reports to us. The last words alone are worth notice — 'And here is a further counsel of mine to you. This St. Patrick, against whom these enemies of ours have done so many injuries, is archbishop and head of the saints of Erin. Let us, then, pray fervently to him for victory and triumph over our enemies.' They all answered—'Let our protector,' they said, 'be the holy Patrick, and the God who is Lord over him also; and let our spoils and our wealth be given to his Church.' Then they went 'unanimously and bravely and manfully' against the Norsemen and gave battle.

It sounds rather apocryphal certainly, all this about praying to St. Patrick, and to the God who is Lord of him also, and giving gifts to his Church. But, at any rate, from such preface we can guess the issue. 'The whizzing of darts, the clash of shields, the groans of wounded and dying filled the air. But though it was long, in the end the Norsemen were defeated,

[1] Orm? The Orm of the Orme's Head in Carnarvon probably. Unless we should read Horn, as Anlaf becomes Amlaiph in Irish.

and the Danes gained the victory and the glory of that day, through the protection of St. Patrick, albeit the Norsemen were three or four times their number.'

Then follows a scene, ghastly but graphic enough, showing the Danes after their victory roasting their supper on land, the spits (or spears for spits) stuck in the bodies of slain Norsemen. And then this fragment of our chronicle comes to an end, and we have to return to the monotonous calendars. 'This year the Gaill and the Gaedhil fought at —— ;' without detail or distinction between one raid or battle and another.

III.

Turn back again to France. Charles the Bald knew nothing of the doings of Danes or Norsemen in Ireland, and there were not upon his coasts two nations who could be pitted one against the other. Nevertheless his policy turned somewhat in this direction. He sought to use the Danes of one settlement against the Danes of another, to bribe the Vikings of the Somme to attack the Vikings of the Seine. It was not a very honourable policy, but it was one of the means to which he had to resort; part of a slow and stubborn resistance in detail, a constant combating from point to point which marked his dealings with the Vikings for long years henceforth—an inglorious Fabian policy, but not without its effect in the end.

Other means which Charles employed—part, they also, of the machinery of the same system—were more worthy. Charles had military instinct enough to see the necessity of improving his cavalry arm. The Danes themselves had long made good use of horses, but chiefly for the sake of transport. On horses—a mounted infantry, or even as I have said a sort of horse-marines—when away from their ships they scoured the country. Half their success was due to the rapidity of their movements. Charles sought to meet them by developing a regular cavalry. A decree of his passed in these years[1] ordained that every man whose holding was of a certain value

[1] Council of Pitres, *c.* 26, Pertz, *Leg.* i. 494.

should come into the field on horseback; this decree is counted by military historians as the veritable institution of the *man-at-arms* of the Middle Ages—the type of soldier who held the field as by far the most important contingent in any army until the victories of the Swiss infantry over the troops of Burgundy and Milan at the beginning of the Renaissance Era, once more gave a superior importance to infantry, which the improvement in arms of precision finally secured to it.

A third means adopted by Charles against the Vikings was the building of fortified bridges on the rivers to bar the passage against Danish fleets. A very obvious means, it might be said. But in the first place the art of fortification had been very little cultivated of recent years. It would almost seem as if in this matter the Christians took lessons from the heathens; for the Vikings had long been in the habit of making themselves fortified camps. We do not know the methods of military architecture which they employed, but they succeeded in making their camps practically impregnable—as was proved in the case of the Oissel siege.

At first the Christians were afraid to possess strong places for fear they should fall into the hands of the enemy, and an order was made to destroy the old remains of Roman camps for this very reason.[1] Now, however, Charles began the fortification of some of the rivers—very tentatively at first. The first place in which Charles tried this new method of warfare was Pitres, a point on the Seine a little above the great Danish camp of Oissel. On this the works at Pitres were designed, no doubt, as a sort of post of observation. Pitres lay, moreover, close to the junction of the two rivers, the Eure and the Andelle, with the Seine, and so barred the ascent of all three streams. At the first meeting of a general council at Pitres in 862 the works had already been begun, and Charles urged on the nobility of the neighbourhood the

[1] But also because they were nests of robbers and for the encouragement which they gave to insubordination among the vassals of the kingdom. See *Edict of Pitres*, cap. 37.

necessity of prosecuting them with vigour. In 864, at the second council, they were thought to be complete. They had some effect in deterring Viking raids. But of far greater importance, as they were to prove twenty years later, were the defensive works which Charles set on foot at Paris, building two bridges from the Paris island across the Seine to bar ingress up that water-way into the centre of France.

It was a wretched thing that the guardians of the great Frankish Empire should have to resort to such mere dilatory expedients to save the land from the attacks of raw northern barbarians. Could any one in the days of Charlemagne have conceived that the kingdom which he and his ancestors had built up—nay, that the unconquered race of the Franks themselves—would have been, in little more than half a century, trembling and hiding, or dodging, so to say, behind their fortifications, bringing cunning to bear instead of strength, by setting one Viking host against another? Yet, as under all forms of decay there exist likewise the germs of new life, though life of a different kind maybe, so here, doubtless, Nature had not gone to sleep, but was in her own way fashioning *something* out of what had once been the mighty power of the Franks; a something to which we have no right yet to give a name, for it is as yet but an embryo. I will not take upon myself even to describe what that something was, only to recognize, when I see them, some of the processes which were bringing it into existence.

For the peasants of this age it was an evil time. Charles's schemes for protecting the country, whatever they may have been worth, were of too general a kind to take much account of individual cases. Isolated instances of suffering, single instances repeated a hundred times, were of small consequence so long as an appearance of kingship could be maintained. When those strandhögs were going on, and burning cottages reddened the sky, the king looked away. He did indeed make some decrees during this period which were designed to relieve the obligations of those peasants who, through Viking

ravages, might be driven from their homes and compelled to fail in their duties to their lords.[1]

Their lords were restrained from exacting the service which they could not pay. But who was to restore them what they had lost? Where was the lord whose duty it was to defend them from such ravages?

Once—it was in 858—some of the Aquitanian peasants, driven to frenzy by the Viking cruelties, rose up in the mere courage of despair, like sheep turning upon wolves, and did actually succeed in gaining the better of their spoilers. But the nobles grew alarmed at the sight of such independence, and siding with their adversaries, with the heathen invaders, against their own people, drove these back into their kennels again—a shameful sight, the saddest in all the history of that sad century. One may well fancy that some of the stronger and bolder and wilder of the peasantry would rather throw in their lot with the enemy than any longer serve such masters. There at least they found a *carrière ouverte aux talents*—to talents such as they possessed, a strong arm, a lion's courage, and the ferocity of wolves. There must be some foundation for the stories of famous Viking leaders who had once been Christian peasants—of Aquitaine, or wherever it might be—and, like the Gaill-Gaedhil of Ireland, had foresworn their country and their God, and joined their fortunes with the enemies of both. Such, according to one story, was the origin of the thrice-famous Hasting. He, so went the tale, had once been a simple peasant of Aquitaine.

But, without apostacy to a man's religion or treachery to his country, there was a career open to the fortunate brave of any rank; or how should that story have arisen which made the ancestor of the succeeding royal house of France a *beccaio di Parigi*, a butcher of Paris, as Dante calls Robert the Strong? In his case the myth is utterly untrue. But no doubt it represents many a true history of the brave and successful men of those times. Many great families had their origin in these days of turmoil. We can find the

[1] *Edict of Pitres*, Pertz, *Leges*, i. 488 *sqq*.

father of Robert the Strong, but we cannot find him a grandfather. Of another champion of these days, Baldwin of the Iron Arm, the king's Forester and Count of Flanders, and eventually his son-in-law, I do not know that we can even find the father. This is the compensation which Nature makes us for an era of revolution, which must also needs be an era of decay, this *carrière ouverte aux talents*, this rise of fresh blood to enforce the feeble current of the old. First of all the germinal processes which were going on now I place this rise of great men, new men, the ancestors of famous houses, men without ancestors of their own.

Everywhere, whether they were new men or old, the vassals of the Crown were growing into independence. How could it be otherwise, when the prestige of the kingly rank—nay, what was still more weighty, the prestige of the Carling name—had fallen so low? Everywhere, in all parts of the empire, as by a necessary natural process, we see the same thing going on—the rise of great houses. Only in France—in Charles's kingdom—where the Frankish and the Carling names had fallen so much the most, the process is more revolutionary, the rise is more sudden, there are more new men. Elsewhere it is chiefly that houses already famous gain vastly in importance and power.

IV.

Great already was the family from which the late Empress Dowager Judith came, the family of Count Welf the Bavarian. Two of the daughters of that Count Welf married into the royal Carling House, the Empress Judith for one, Emma, her sister, for another; she married Lewis the German, so that this last was his own father's brother-in-law. He was Charles the Bald's uncle-in-law and half-brother. The sons of Welf were two, Rudolf and Conrad. Conrad had for children a second Conrad and Hugo, both of whom we have seen taking conspicuous parts in the drama of Lewis the German's instalment as ruler of West Francia in 858, and his expulsion the following year. The second Conrad had as son another

Rudolf, whom we shall see long hence rising to kingly honours upon the ruins of the empire.[1] These Welfs were illustrious by their connections, for they were related in many different ways to all the kings of the Carling House; through their two aunts in the way we have seen; through their mother, Adelis or Adelais, they were cousins to the Emperor Lewis II. and to Lothair II. But these Welfings were even more illustrious by their own achievements, especially the second of them, Abbot Hugh. Their varied relationships might well make them of a somewhat doubtful allegiance. Two of them, we have just said, were at first among the leaders of the party which invited Lewis the German into West Francia; and almost directly after his invasion they began to scheme for the restoration of Charles. But by more honourable means also they rose to power. Hugh became in later years the chosen successor of Robert the Strong, in his abbey of Marmoutiers and his county of Anjou; that is to say, he became the guardian of the Breton marches against the Bretons, as well as the defender of the Fatherland against the ceaseless and most dangerous attacks of the Loire Danes.

It was when the Danes were allied with the Bretons that they became most threatening. This Abbot Hugh lived long. He became, after the death of Charles the Bald, almost a regent of the kingdom, and redeemed early days of treachery, or something like it, by a long and faithful service to the Western Carling House.

Saxony never received its due share of attention from Lewis the German, who was to the end *hoch-deutsch* in all his tastes and associations. He had ruled his Bavarian kingdom long before he received his *nieder-deutsch* territories, and his thoughts centred round his first subjects. Their neglect at the hands of Lewis necessarily led the Saxons to look the more to the nobility of their own stock. Of these by far the greatest was the house whose representatives were two counts

[1] There was a third Conrad, son of the elder Rudolf, likewise a conspicuous figure in these days.

of Lewis's Court, Count Cobbo and Count Liudolf. They were of an ancient Saxon family, whose genealogy went back into the days of heathenism and freedom. Of these two brothers, who belong to the history of this time, we have already seen Count Cobbo sent as ambassador to Horik, King of Denmark, what time Ragnar returned laden with booty and with sickness from his Paris raid. Cobbo was used to offices of high trust; he had been, for example, one of Lewis's plenipotentiaries in discussing the preliminaries to the Treaty of Verdun. Though Cobbo and Liudolf could look back to the time when their ancestors had borne rule among the independent Saxons,[1] there was no taint of *stellinga*-rebeldom about them. They had no heathen leanings. Both were strong Churchmen, counted (no small advantage in those days) more than one female saint among their kin, were themselves liberal endowers of churches and monasteries,[2] and not the less brave and successful soldiers. Through the indifference of Lewis the German to Saxon affairs, Liudolf, after he had succeeded his brother, became almost a king in Saxony. To him was confided the task of guarding the Danish mark, as well as of protecting the north-eastern frontiers of the kingdom against the Slavs. Like the illustrious Welf family in the west, these Saxon counts were allied to the royal house: allied through the marriage of the second Lewis, Lewis the Saxon—so-called—with Liudolf's daughter, Liutgard. Liudolf died (A.D. 866) with the title—only borne by the first noblemen of the realm—of *dux Saxonum*, Duke of the Saxons.

But this Saxon duke was more famous in his descendants than in himself. He had two sons, Bruno and Otto. The former succeeded him in his duchy, but was killed, as appears, when leading his Saxons against the Danes in a great battle on Luneburg Heath in the year 880. Otto succeeded, and

[1] They were related somehow to Widukind himself.

[2] The foundation of Gandersheim by Liudolf and Oda is related in verse by Hruosvitha (Pertz, iv. 306), and in prose by Agius, *Vita Hathumod.* (Ibid. 166–189), *cf. Ann. Qued.* 852. Oda died at the age of 107.

held the duchy from 880 to the year 912. He added Thuringia to the vast domains which he ruled, amid the troubles of the Carling House, almost as an independent prince. Otto's son was Henry, that brave duke whom Conrad, the first of the non-Carling emperors, though in his days of vigour they had been rivals, himself, on his death-bed, designated as the most worthy to wear after him the imperial diadem; to the exclusion of Conrad's own kin. In 918 Henry ascended the imperial throne as Henry I., and is known to us as Henry *the Fowler*. He it was who drove the Magyar hordes back from the German lands. In him began the 'Saxon' emperors in Germany. To Henry's grandson Otto, called Otto the Great, it was given, one may say, to roll back the stream of time, and to wrest from the popes the power and privileges which, through years of toil, they had gathered at the expense of the emperors. But these things carry us far beyond our present era.

In this century there was another great German duke whose name deserves to be had in remembrance. This was Duke Henry of Thuringia, of family and attainments not inferior to the two great Saxon counts. Of some of his own achievements we shall hereafter be the witnesses; but as his descendants were, so far as we can tell, undistinguished, there is no need to speak of them.

Let us rather look across to the western kingdom, to the offspring of another Saxon who had settled there. This Saxon was named Witichin or Witikin. There is nothing to show that he was of noble birth; but in the open field of the west he won himself some fame. Herein, however, he was far outshone by his son, that thrice-famous Robert of whom we have already often had to speak. Robert became Count of Anjou. His was the task of defending the Breton marches, and at the same time of keeping guard against the power of the Vikings of the Loire, who were so close to the Breton frontier; and for a reward for his great services he held as lay abbot the rich abbey of Marmoutiers at Tours. Robert,

too, like so many of the founders of great houses of this age, we remember far more for the sake of his descendants than for himself: so germinal was this time, so full of the seeds of future history. No need to speak of the offspring of this Robert, whom after-ages would have to have been a *beccaio di Parigi*. Even in the course of our history we shall see the enthronement of the first king of this house, but not the definite and final enthronement of the house in the person of Hugh Capet, Hugh of the Hood.

Strange that the two most famous royal houses whose rise we trace in this age should both have been Saxon. Over here in England at the same time, just growing up to manhood, was another Saxon, a West Saxon; not the founder of a new house, for he was an ætheling of the reigning one, but the father of not less famous descendants than either Robert or Liudolf, and more than they, the champion of the civilized world against the powers of heathendom and anarchy which fought under the banners of the Vikings—I mean our English Ælfred.

Many more of the great men of this age might we speak of—of Count Baldwin of Flanders; of Count Rammulf, Duke of Aquitaine, who often, through these dark days, fought against the Vikings by the side of Robert the Strong; of Count Vivianus, whose death we witnessed a while ago at the battle of Rennes; of Hukbert, the grim abbot, who guarded the passes of the Alps in his abbey of St. Maurice in Vallais (where, men said, there went on doings strange indeed for the home of an ecclesiastic), and who, almost all his life long, was a thorn in the side of King Lothair; of Ernest the Margrave of the Bohemian border, father-in-law of Carlman, King Lewis's eldest son, and for a while Lewis the German's most trusted counsellor, then as suddenly dismissed by him and deprived of all his fiefs; or of Adalhard, the uncle-in-law of Charles the Bald, his strongest defence in earlier days, but like the Welfic brothers, one who in 858 played the part of a king-maker between the rivals, Lewis the German and Charles;[1] of how many others.

[1] Adalhard and the Welfings were generally in rivalry, and the part which the former took in bringing in Lewis may have influenced the latter to change sides. *Cf.* Dümmler, *o.c.* i. 422–3.

Even then we should only have exhausted the list of the great laymen. There still remain the Churchmen, who now play such an important part in politics, both lay and ecclesiastical. There are many whose names might well deserve to be commemorated; yet they all sink into insignificance by the side of the greatest prelate of the Frankish Empire in the latter half of the ninth century; I mean Hincmar, the Archbishop of Rheims, who might be called the Hildebrand of his age, only that this title belongs of right to his contemporary, Pope Nicholas the First. Hincmar was a Hildebrand in character, but his policy was the policy of the head of the Church of France, of what was to call itself at a later date the Gallican Church. It was therefore opposed on many points to the traditional policy of the popes, which in this age was upheld by Nicholas the First with almost as much courage and success as in a later century by Gregory VII. The contest between Nicholas and Hincmar, when their paths crossed, was a battle of giants; but the victory remained with the pope.

About the time at which we have now arrived—from about the date 860 onwards—the policy of Charles the Bald was directed by Hincmar far more than by any other man in the kingdom. No doubt we may ascribe to Hincmar's counsels the strain in Charles of greater steadiness of purpose than was to be found before, which, though matters might have seemed almost beyond hope, did eventually have a very decided effect upon the action of the Vikings, and produced in the end an unhoped-for amelioration in the affairs of West Francia. But in his latter days, when Charles found himself growing prosperous, he forsook the counsels of his old adviser, and took up with new feather-headed schemes disastrous in their results, of whose course we shall see something hereafter.

High-reaching were the claims now put forward by the clerical party in the State; but great at the same time were the services they rendered to it, to the strength of Christendom and its defence against enemies within and without. When the Church party in West Francia espoused the side of Charles

against Lewis the German, they at the same time laid down the doctrine that a king neglecting his duties and country *could* be deposed; the consecration of the holy oil *could* be annulled —but only by those who had power in such spiritual things, only by the clergy in solemn synod. Such were their claims.

Their *acts* were for the advantage of their country. Nothing would have been gained by the deposition of Charles, and the bestowal upon Lewis of a duplex rule, a land cut in two by the kingdom of Lothair.

Yet none, it seemed, save his ecclesiastics could be relied upon by the king. The nobility deserted his interests to secure their own power. Some of those who were in after-years the bulwarks of the kingdom were, during those which immediately followed Lewis's invasion and the raising of the siege of Oissel, the patrons of disorder. Such, for example, was Robert the Strong, who, with a party of malcontent nobles in confederation, drove Charles's son Lewis from the Breton marches and inaugurated a reign of lawlessness there. Robert and his allies were called to account by a synod held at Saumiers in June, 859, and threatened with excommunication.

A.D. 860. And now, also through the pressure exercised by the clergy of Charles's and Lothair's kingdom, as well as through the intervention of Lothair II. himself, a reconciliation took place between Lewis the German and his injured brother, Charles the Bald. Charles came to a conference at Coblenz and made a solemn recitation of his wrongs. Lewis made apology, and promised in the future to preserve the terms of the Treaty of Verdun. This was in 860.

V.

Meantime the Vikings had been making unhindered their camps along the chief rivers of France, and Charles, renouncing his earlier ambition of driving them away by force of arms, began to have recourse to his new methods. He entered into negotiations with the Danes in the Somme. At the head of them was a leader, Weland by name, a name of terror or of hope. Charles sought to enlist Weland against Weland's

brother, or his rival, Vikings of the Seine. The first step in the new policy was a miserable failure. Charles had promised three thousand pounds of silver, and had given hostages to the Danes for the same. But though the shrines and churches were made to yield up their treasures, the whole sum was not forthcoming, or not so quickly as to suit the requirements of Weland and his men; whereat they set sail, carried off their hostages, and instead of falling upon the Vikings of the Seine, they made for the English coast, and plundered the famous capital of Wessex—Winchester.[1] This was the first attack which our country had felt since the death of Æthelwulf, two years before; it is likewise the last (or almost the last) in what may be called the transition period of the Viking raids in England. A new and disastrous era was to dawn for England, in which all the heroism of her sons and all the great qualities of the children of Æthelwulf were to be put to the proof.

The English Chronicle says that subsequent to the storming of Winchester the Vikings were defeated. At any rate Weland and his band came back to France next year. They demanded a contribution twice as large as the first—five thousand pounds of silver, cattle and corn for the support of their troops: and Charles the Bald, with unheard-of exertions (extortions, say his detractors), had to raise that vast sum. Meantime the Seine Danes had grown more insolent than before. Twice during the spring of 861 they seized horses, rode along the banks of Seine up to Paris, which now underwent its third and fourth plunderings. The churches of St. Vincent and St. Germains were a prey to the flames—St. Germains, which had once been a scene of such disaster to the ravagers, was now plundered unavenged. A.D. 861.

But joy no doubt awoke in many breasts at the news that, the treaty with Weland being completed, the Somme Danes had in very truth set sail for the Seine. The Seine Danes were shut in by their fellow-Vikings, hard pressed by hunger. But there was no thought on the part of Weland and his fleet of destroying their fellow-countrymen. They need only agree

[1] *AS. Chron.* 860.

to disgorge their plunder. Hard pressed and much against their will, the Seine Vikings at last promised to pay to the Vikings of the Somme six thousand pounds in gold and silver. At that price they gained a free passage to the sea; to turn to other lands or to return to these, when the rival fleet should have sailed away. If the Christians objected to this treaty let them do better for themselves. Many of the Oissel Danes joined hands with their conquerors. They were under no famous leader: so they took service with Weland's son. Charles had gained little by all his exertions and negotiations, by the plunderings (as men called them) of Christian churches. He had to place troops under his son Lewis to guard the Seine and keep watch over the vast body of Vikings spread along all its length. But as for direct attacks they were not to be thought of.

A.D. 862–4. The plunderings in Friesland were as bad. The Vikings had firm hold of the Batavian island. They had plundered Utrecht, and destroyed many of its churches, and in the year 862 they made another descent on Saxony. Lewis the German came north to defend his territories. This visit of his to Saxony in the year 862 was the last he ever made to that country. Henceforth to Liudolf and its other native counts must Saxony trust. The following year the Vikings were up the Rhine again, first to Dorstad. They sailed farther, to the abbey of Xanten, and burnt its beautiful church, St. Victor. But, say the Xanten chroniclers, they were seized with madness when they had done this, and abandoned the treasure they had robbed from the churches.[1] Lothair II. bestirred himself this year. He joined hands with the Saxons, eager to revenge the ravages of 862. We see the Saxons now acting independently, making independent alliances. The two Christian armies marched along opposite banks down the Rhine. Lothair effected nothing with his troops. But the Saxons did come to blows with their enemies, defeated them and slew their leader Kalbi.[2]

[1] This sounds like a reminiscence of the Paris miracle. *Ann. X.* a. 864 (P. ii. 231–2). *A. X.* are generally one year later than the true date.

[2] Ibid.

These victories were ineffective. The Vikings continued to settle in the Low Countries. Rudolf, a son of the baptized Harald—a nephew therefore to Rorik and brother to Godfred—received a heavy tribute from Lothair, presumably as guardian of the Frisian coasts (A.D. 864). The Vikings who came to England about this time are called by a chronicler *Scaldings*, *i.e.*, Scheld men.[1] From which it would seem that the Northmen held a firm station on that river as well as upon all the mouths of the Rhine.

Charles had begun the process of blocking the Seine at Pitres. It was to produce good results in later years. But at present all seemed to point to disaster. Charles's children were following the Carling tradition and turning against him—two were especially troublesome, his daughter Judith and his son Lewis. Judith had been years ago, as we saw, married to Æthelwulf of England. But he died in 858, two years before Weland's attack on Winchester, and Judith, who had scandalized England and Europe by a marriage with her husband's son Æthelbald, was now left a second time a widow. She came back to France, to her father's Court. There she cast her wandering glances upon one of the new men who had grown to favour and fame in the defence of the land against the Danes, that Baldwin the Forester of whom mention has been made. She allowed Baldwin to carry her off—yielding professedly to force—and consented to become his wife. But Charles the Bald was so greatly incensed that he forbade the marriage, though the only effect must be to disgrace his daughter. Lewis sided with his sister, and Baldwin appealed to the Pope. It was Pope Nicholas I., always on the lookout for an occasion to intervene in the affairs of the empire. Though he had at this moment Lothair's marriage question upon his hands, Nicholas did not fear to brave the anger of the West Frank king by espousing the cause of Baldwin and of Judith.

A.D. 862.

[1] 'Scaldingi,' Sim. Dun. in M. H. B., p. 795-800. *Cf.* Storm, *Bidrag, etc.*, p. 81.

It gives us a picture of the lawlessness of the time that Baldwin should have dared to threaten to join forces with the Danes, and that the pope should have pleaded this danger as a reason for Charles's reconciling himself with his rebellious subject. Low indeed had sunk the Carlings when they were obliged to make terms with subjects on such terms as these. Yet here were Charles's children combining against him, siding with this contumacious lord. Long as Charles kicked against the pricks, he had to give way in the end and allow Judith's marriage to be publicly solemnized. There was, indeed, no room for any other policy than that of keeping the Vikings at bay.

A.D. 863.

The Vikings of the Loire country were stirring again—in Poictou—some had even penetrated as far as Auvergne. Pippin, the old pretender to Aquitaine, sprang out of obscurity once more and openly joined forces with this band of pirates.

One consoling feature in the situation was that one of the great leaders of the Seine Danes—Björn Ironside, the son of Ragnar Lodbrok—had come to Charles a year or two ago to Verbérie and done homage. This was another part of the policy of Charles—to try and settle the more peacefully disposed among the Viking leaders in the territories near his coast where they might serve as a barrier against fresh fleets.

A.D. 858.

A still more consolatory feature was the growing activity of some of the great vassals—those new men of whom we have spoken. Count Baldwin both before and after he got into trouble with King Charles deserved well of the State for his defence of the Flanders country. Through him the Vikings were driven off in 863. Still more renowned were the achievements of Robert and of Ramnulf in these years. Robert the Strong gained, moreover, in 863, a great victory over the Bretons and over Lewis, Charles the Bald's own son, who was in rebellion against his father. This victory was followed in 864 by a peace in which the Breton king (Salomon[1] his name

[1] Salomon was a usurper who had murdered the preceding prince, Erispoï—possibly with the connivance of Charles. See Gfrörer *o.c.*

was) once more became a tributary of the King of the Franks, and part of what Charles had been fighting for ever since he came to the throne was regained. Against the Loire Vikings the efforts of Robert and Ramnulf were unceasing in these years (865, 866). Not always victorious but never dispirited, they carried on their work and wore out their foes by continued conflicts.

But what evil fate was that which in the autumn of the latter year sent these two heroes together in pursuit of a little band of some four hundred Danes and Bretons who had galloped across country to fall upon the town of Le Mans, on the Sarthe, not far removed either from the Breton borders or the settlements of the Loire Danes? This was the country which had been specially trusted to the care of Count Robert. He collected a troop, and on their way back the plunderers were met by this corps of Franks, under the command of Count Robert, Count Ramnulf, Count Heriveus, and Count Godfred, all redoubted champions of Christendom, though the last, one would think, must have been a Dane by descent. The marauders on their side were under the orders of a very famous Viking leader—the second most famous in tradition of all those who were active in this century —the leader Hasting. Under such a captain the Vikings were not likely to submit tamely nor at once; for, besides his strength in battle, Hasting was famous above all other Viking captains for his resource in moments of difficulty. A.D. 866.

It was at Brisarthe that the Franks came up with the Danes: they so far outnumbered them that the latter had no choice but to shut themselves up in a strong stone church which the place boasted.[1] All who could not find refuge there in time were slain. Those inside could not, however, be driven out—unlucky that here there should be a church of stone; had it been of wood only! But by this time in France proper wooden churches were beginning to be outnumbered by the stone ones. The afternoon wore on to evening—in fruitless attacks. At last the Franks resolved to fix their camp outside the church,

[1] Regino, s.a. 867 [= 866].

and renew the attack next day. Count Robert was resting from his labours and had laid aside his helmet and his breast-plate for a moment to cool himself in the breeze of that autumn evening. All work seemed ended for that day.

But not so thought the hawk-eyed Hasting or his Danes, for ever on the alert. Few as they were they chose this moment to make a sally on the unsuspecting Franks. Immediately all was in confusion. Count Robert seized his arms and rushed bareheaded to the front. Count Ramnulf had come up. The Franks held their own, and now began to drive back the foe with the weight of their superior numbers, Count Robert still fighting at their front. But alas! in the doors of the church the Vikings made a stand (or maybe they had only pretended to fly thither in order to draw on their foe), and in the *mêlée* there Robert was struck down. An arrow from the window gave Ramnulf a wound from which in a few days he died. And the Christians were so disconcerted at the fall of the bravest of their leaders that they thought no more of destroying Hasting and his followers, but stood idly by and let them escape to their ships.[1] In truth, as a contemporary says, the loss was worse than the loss of ten thousand men. What could make up to France for the death of this chosen champion, this Judas Maccabæus,[2] who seemed called by Heaven to free the people of the Lord from their oppressors.

Robert left two sons behind him, another Robert, afterwards Count of Paris, and Odo, who rose higher still, to be King of France. They were too young to receive the position and the fiefs which he had held; these were granted, most of them, to Hugh the Welf, a worthy follower in Robert's steps. He now became Abbot of Marmoutiers. On him for many years rested the best hopes of France. But Odo and Robert inherited something better than the possessions of their father—his undaunted valour and the honour of his name. Their day of fame was to come.

[1] The best account of this is in Regino, *l.c.*; *cf.* also *A. Bert.* 866 (P. i. 472–3); *A. X.* 867; *Ann. Fuld.* (Anon.) 867.

[2] *Ann. Fuld. l.c.*

This sad disaster closed the year 866. It would have seemed to an outside observer that no amelioration had begun in the affairs of France, no cessation in the Viking terror. But a nearer view would have shown a growing weariness on the part of the invaders. They seemed somehow to make no progress, and many were becoming tired of remaining mere settlers on the outskirts of the empire. Yet, what other future lay before them, while they continued on the Seine or on the Loire? No doubt the majesty, the prestige, which still hemmed round the imperial name had some effect upon their imagination. They might settle like leeches upon the body of the Frankish state, but the thought of making a conquest of the Franks at all comparable (if they knew of them) to the Norwegian conquests in Ireland was still far from their minds. If, then, they would inaugurate a new era, change from their transition state of mere settlers, mere sucking leeches, and appear as conquerors and the colonizers of conquered lands, they must look elsewhere than to France. And many had already begun to cast their eyes across the English channel and to speculate on the possibility of wholly subduing this country, and erecting in it a new Scandinavian state—a Viking state, fit to balance the growing power and the growing concentration of the parent kingdoms in Denmark and Norway and Sweden.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT ARMY.

I.

ALREADY some of the great leaders were growing impatient of their life in France. Björn Ironside—we saw him some years ago, coming to the Court of Charles the Bald at Verbérie and doing homage to the king for a fief which he received, as though he had made up his mind to give up the life of adventure and settle down in France. But the Viking spirit came upon him again before long, and next year he set to work to fit out a new expedition and to prepare for a voyage more adventurous than any which a Scandinavian fleet had yet embarked upon. This was in 859, seven years before the last event related in the preceding chapter. By the side of Björn in this voyage we find the same leader whom we have just seen resisting the attack of Count Robert at Brisarthe, and causing the death of the count—I mean Hasting. So that, when he made that marauding attack upon Le Mans, Hasting had probably not long returned from the far more exciting and perilous adventure which we have now to relate. Unfortunate that, as is their wont, the chroniclers give us the outlines only of this voyage of discovery.

A.D. 859.

Hasting has not a good character in the Norman tradition. He appears in Dudo as a kind of rival of Rolf the Ganger, the conqueror of Normandy. He appears as the Odysseus among

the band of Viking chiefs, the man of many wiles; and among a people who, whatever their practice, did not perhaps hold wiliness in such good repute as it stood among the Greeks. Hasting was one of those who in after-years became amenable to the new policy instituted by Charles the Bald; that is to say, he was one of those whom it was possible to bribe over to the Christian side, to set to guard the frontier against fresh bands of Vikings. In those later years he received the rich territory of Chartres and was often treated by the King of France as one of his trusted counsellors. In such a capacity he appeared before the fleet of Rolf when it neared the Norman coast. He came to parley with the crews in the name of the French king. They demanded who he was. 'Heard ye never of Hasting?' was the reply of the famous Viking. 'Yea,' answered Rolf, 'we have heard of him as the man who began well and ended ill.' Such is the Hasting of Norman tradition. At the same time this friend of the Christians is represented as the most cruel of the heathen leaders, compared to whom Rolf and his men come as a sort of saviours to the land they conquered.[1]

Björn, then, and this Hasting, in A.D. 859 prepared their fleet.[2] There was, it seems, likewise a younger brother of Björn on board, another son of Ragnar Lodbrok. The fleet was not a large one, compared to many which we have seen—not more than seventy sail. But then this was a voyage of absolutely new adventure, promising no immediate gain, for it was not directed against the known lands of France or Frisia, nor even against the English coast, but designed for the far southern shores of Spain, and, as it proved, for countries farther still. Spain had up to now been only once visited by a Viking fleet, fifteen years ago. This fleet of Björn made first for the same regions which had been before attacked—the kingdom of Asturias which lay among its mountains upon the northern coast, that single state in which the Northern pirates never made any way. Ramiro I. had been the King of Asturias at

[1] Dudo (Bk. i.) devotes eleven lines of bombastic verse and as many of prose to abuse of Hasting.

[2] Fabricius, *Forbindelserne mellem Norden og den sp. Halvö*, p. 69 *sqq.*

the time of the first attack. The name of the present king was Ordono I. Of the kings of these days we know no more, or little more, than the names, much as we should like to know. Ordono was at the moment engaged against his constant enemies the Moors: but a count of the province, Don Pedro, attacked the Vikings and defeated them, driving them out of this country. They put to sea again and now once again the Northerners reached the kingdom of the Arabs. They found the same fleets guarding the coasts that had proved so formidable to their predecessors; and in attacks on these and unsuccessful attempts to land, they sailed down the western coast of Spain. The Viking fleet consisted of but two-and-sixty sail when it was first descried by the fleet of the Arabs; and in encounters with these last the Northmen lost two of their ships. But still they sailed on; and now they came to the southern coasts, and sighted the minarets of Seville and the orange groves of the Guadalquivir. That land must have seemed an earthly paradise to these sons of Boreas, and might well invite them to strenuous attempts at conquest. But the Arabs were prepared to receive them. An army under the banner of Hajib Isa-ibn-Hassan marched upon the marauders, and the fleet was obliged to weigh anchor and sail out to the open sea.

And now it did what no northern fleet had ever done before —sailed through the Pillars of Hercules, and its crews were the first of their race who ever burst into the Mediterranean Sea. Tacitus tells us in his 'Germania' that the Germans in his day showed the place where their Hercules had set up his pillars in the far north. This may have been the entrance to that very Vik whence most of the Viking ships had issued. Hercules would be the Scandinavian god Thorr. Now the Northeners were to make acquaintance with the places which classical tradition connected with the travels of Thor's counterpart the classic Hercules, and with the famed garden of the daughters of the West.

Once through the Pillars of Hercules the northern fleet passed, as the Arab chronicler says, like a desolating whirlwind,

along the provinces of Raya, Cartana, Rondas, Malaga, all parts of the present province of Malaga; it sailed on to Algezera and there burnt a very celebrated mosque. But everywhere the Arab troops were on the alert. The Vikings gained one victory over them. But on the approach of a larger force, despatched by the Emir himself, they left the Spanish coast and sailed across the sea to Morocco, to a place called Nekor.[1] The Moorish king gathered an army to encounter the strangers, but his courage failed him at the pinch. He fled by night; and when his army awoke and found it was leaderless, it also took to flight. From Nekor the fleet came back to the Murcian coast and gained a victory over the coast militia. From Murcia they passed on to Alicante (to Orihuela). But at sea they were caught by the Arab squadron and lost two more of their vessels; fifty-eight sail now at most instead of seventy. They visited the Balearic Isles and made great havoc there; and then they navigated right up the eastern coast of Spain—all regions which had never before known, perhaps never before heard of, their terrors. They marched inland and attacked Pampeluna and took prisoner Garcia, King of Vasconia or Navarre. He paid a ransom of ninety thousand denarii. According to some accounts they took Narbonne; it is certain that they plundered the holy places in Rousillon. Last of all they set sail far over the Mediterranean until they came to the delta of the Rhone and the low island which that delta forms and which is called the Camargue.

The Camargue had already for some time been a favourite haunt of the Arab corsairs, the Mediterranean counterparts of the Vikings. It was their Walcheren or Oissel, the safe place in which they refitted their *rates quassas* and prepared fresh assaults upon the inland towns.[2] These Arab pirates had grown to a height of insolence which might rival that of the Vikings in the north. Witness a story which the Hincmar tells us of the Bishop of Arles and the Arab pirates, comparable in every way to some of the stories of the Vikings and their

[1] Still so called.

[2] Prudentius mentions an attack by them on Arles in A.D. 842.

doings. The Arabs took the unfortunate bishop prisoner and treated him so roughly that he died in their hands. But meanwhile they found that the people of Arles were ready to give any sum to ransom the man of God. The bishop therefore was brought forward from the pirate galleys, dressed in his robes, seated on his throne. How reverently these Moslem bear the holy man! And now the people see that their bishop is really to be brought back to them, they pay the ransom at once. The pirates place him on the sea-shore and retire; the people rush forward to kiss his hand and receive his benediction. Alas! that hand is cold. It was a dead bishop which the Saracens bore with such care, for whom we have paid such a heavy ransom. The Arabs of the Camargue were not likely to yield a ready place to strangers. We may presume, therefore, that at this moment they had abandoned the Camargue for more promising fields in Italy; for we do not hear that these two rival powers of the sea came into contact now, and it is probable that Björn and Hasting and their fleet stayed through the winter months of 859–60 by the island. 'They fortified themselves in a town,' says the chronicler, 'which to this day bears their name.' We do not hear that the Vikings were disturbed in their winter retreat. They were now in the country of the King of Provence, of Charles, the third son of Lothair, a poor, weakly, epileptic prince, about whom history is almost silent. He was still young, but his life was worth just three years' purchase and no more: not a king whom the Northmen need dread. They made a short expedition up the Rhone and took Valence. But when spring came round a new and weightier enterprise possessed their thoughts; nothing less than an attack upon the capital of the world—in a certain sense it was this still—upon Rome itself—that strange city of which no doubt many of their legends told.

They did set sail, but from want of pilots they came not to the Tiber but to the Bay of Spezzia where marble Luna lay mirrored in the sea.[1] Luna had already been attacked by one

[1] Or perhaps first to Pisa, afterwards to Luna. On the grounds for supposing that the following incident which is sporadic in Viking legend really belongs to this Luna expedition, see Steenstrup, *o.c.* i. 26 *sq.*

set of pirates—the Arabs—in 848, and, being still fortified with its Roman walls, it might defy the siege of this fleet's crew of Vikings devoid of machinery for engineering works.

Hasting, that Loki of the Vikings, had (as the story goes) other weapons at hand beside those of open force. He devised a trick whereby his followers should find their way into the gates. He sent to say that he and his comrades had not come to make war upon Christians; that they had been driven by their fellow-countrymen from their settlements in France; that he himself was near his end, and all he desired was to be admitted by baptism into the Christian Church. It had become not uncommon, as we know, for the Northmen to seek this right of way to salvation, and to do so upon their death-beds. The Bishop of Luna came out with due procession of priests and choir to visit the sick Hasting and to perform the right he prayed for. It was no surprise to the Christians to learn on the following day that the Viking leader was dead, and that he had claimed, as he had a right to claim, Christian burial in Christian ground. Accordingly the governor (*præsul*) and the Bishop of Luna prepared to admit a cortège of mourners round the bier of the dead sea-king. In solemn procession, with tapers and chantings, it was conducted to the monastery in the middle of the city, and the mass for the dead was sung. Then they made preparations for the burial. But the Northmen round the bier raised a shout of refusal. What was its meaning? The heathens, we know, burned their dead, did not bury them. Burn or bury? became in after-years a test question in the North, showing whether some king or warrior had really died a Christian or a heathen. Was that the meaning of this shout of resistance? Were the heathen followers going after all to insist that their leader should be interred as a heathen? The governor and all the chief men of the town stood astonished and in doubt. When suddenly—what is this wonder?—the body of the dead chief sprang up. Hasting was alive again. He and his mourners drew their swords, cut down all who stood in their way, and held the town gate. A moment was enough: for the Norsemen had stationed an ambush near the gates.

And so in a few minutes the town itself was in the hands of the Vikings, and the massacre of the citizens and the spoiling of the shrines began.[1]

Such is the story preserved in Norman tradition. After this Luna expedition we do not quite know the next movements of the fleet. One of its leaders, the younger brother of Björn, had long been for turning back. It may be that his voice was now listened to. While they were still upon the African coast he had had an evil dream. He dreamt that their father, his and Björn's, was in imminent peril. 'He is now alive in a country which is not his own. The (second) son whom we left with him has been killed, as was revealed to me by a dream, and his other son was slain in battle. It is wonderful, too, if our father himself has escaped from that battle.'[2]

In 862 we find the leaders of this expedition back again in the west, in Brittany. In 866 Hasting, as we saw, was busily harassing the Loire country and the Breton marches, and was instrumental in the death of Count Robert the Strong.

II.

What was the meaning of that dream of Ragnar's son? What was the fate of Ragnar, the father, which it had foreshadowed? The Norse tradition tells us how Ragnar, envious of the fame which his sons had acquired by the slaying of Eystein, King of Sweden, determined, on his own account, to make an expedition westward. With two huge galleys he set sail for England. There reigned King Ælla. Ragnar's ships were caught in a storm and wrecked upon the Northumbrian coast; his men were killed, he himself seized and brought before Ælla, and by command of the king was cast into a pit of serpents. There, like another Högni, he seized his harp, and, as the serpents bit deep into his flesh, entoned the triumphant ballad of his deeds and the prophecy of the vengeance which would overtake his destroyer—

[1] This account is taken from Dudo, i. 5–7.

[2] O Donovan, *Three fragments*, p. 160, cf. *Fornald. Sögur*, i. 283, and Steenstrup, *o.c.* i. 92.

I hope that Viðri's [1] wand will Ælla pierce,
My sons shall swell with wrath at their father's betrayal.

Ready am I to be gone. The Disir call me home.
When Odin the leader sends from his Hall,
Gladly shall I quaff ale with the Æsir on my seat:
My life's hours are done; joyful I depart.

But another tradition makes Ælla a king in Ireland, who by treachery gets possession of the person of Ragnar, and puts him to death in the manner described above.

There was an Ælla who reigned in Northumbria a few years after the date of the dream of Ragnar's son. He may even have been a powerful nobleman, a sort of under-king at this time.[2] Later on, though not of the royal house, he raised a party which proclaimed him King of Northumbria, where he stood as the rival of the legitimate king, Osberht; until they and their rivalries were alike extinguished by the swords of the Danes.

Another tradition from an English source [3] makes the death of Ragnar Lodbrok the cause of the invasion of East Anglia and of the martyrdom of St. Eadmund, the king of that country, events which followed hard upon the invasion of Northumbria and the death of Ælla. Both traditions point to the conclusion that the great invasion of England of which we have now to speak was connected with the death, the violent death —the murder, if we like to call it so—of the great Norse hero. The story of the dream of Ragnar's son comes from a source distinct alike from the Norse tradition of the death of Lodbrok, and from the English tradition. It seems in some ways to chime in curiously with them; but in other respects there are great difficulties in the way of reconciling the story of the dream

[1] Odin's.

[2] Simeon of Durham (*H. D. E.* c. vi.) says that the Danish invasion of Northumbria, which we have now to relate, occurred in the fifth year of Ælla's reign. That would refer Ælla's usurpation to A.D. 862 or 863, two or three years only after the dream of Ragnar's son. Asser implies that Ælla only acquired a crown in A.D. 867, and he has been followed (as usual) by the *AS. Chr.* But his statement is not quite definite.

[3] Matt. West, a. 870.

with the death of Ragnar on the one hand, or, if that be allowed, of connecting the death of Ragnar with the coming of the great invasion which now, in the year 866, about the same time that Robert the Strong was finding a grave by the banks of Sarthe, set sail for our shores.[1]

Without, then, attempting to square tradition with history, let us take a glance at the condition of England at this time, and at the phase which the Viking attacks on this country had reached.

Ecgberht saw the beginning of the evil, but only that. We know how, even before the hostile fleets began once more to steer for the English coasts, he had, in consultation with his Witan, devised schemes for their protection: how, a couple of years after, an expedition, presumably sent from Ireland, came to the Kentish coast, making its way to a convenient island near the coast (Sheppey); as years before Viking fleets had first settled upon Lindisfarne or Lambay, as at the same time other Viking fleets were settling upon Noirmoutiers or Oissel. The raiders grew bolder, though they met at first with slight success; until at length, allied with the Cornishmen, and with very definite intentions of conquest and settlement (after the Irish pattern), they dared to encounter the great King of Wessex at the head of his troops, and were decisively defeated at Hengston. Soon after which success Ecgberht died and was gathered to his valiant forefathers.

Æthelwulf succeeded. In his reign the Viking attacks on England took a new complexion. Some of them now came (as appears) not from Irish Norsemen, but from the Danes who were plundering and settling all down the Frisian and Frankish shores. The first of the attacks which we may almost certainly assign to these Continental Vikings is that attack upon the marsh country which took place in 840 or 841, following which is the still more important raid which the Chronicle

[1] For other authorities which support this connection see Lappenberg *Gesch. Engl.* i. 299 (Tr. ii. 31). Torfæus clearly confounds Ragnar with Thorgisl.

describes as a great slaughter in London and Rochester, in the year 842. The same fleet attacked Quentovic:[1] no doubt, therefore, it was sailing through the English Channel and falling upon the richest towns on either coast. Far more terrible were the doings of the fleet despatched by Rorik from Frisia nine years later, namely in 851—a monstrous fleet of 350 sail, which ruined London, killed Berhtwulf, King of Mercia, and was at last defeated by the King of Wessex, at Ockley.

This common suffering seemed to bring the English kingdom nearer to its neighbour of France and make us partakers in the affairs of all Christendom. Æthelwulf the king had beside some natural leanings to what one may call cosmopolitanism—towards that policy (which the popes often represented) which looked upon all Western Christendom as essentially one state, bound by the same laws, which (*du reste*) were to be determined rather by the ecclesiastical bodies in their midst than by the caprice of the monarch or even the advice of his lay council. It was this leaning—a leaning more, perhaps, than a direct policy—which made the Wessex king despatch his beloved son Ælfred to Rome with presents to the Pope, and made him afterwards undertake the same journey himself. He stayed at the Court of Charles the Bald and there beheld the beautiful young daughter of the king. Judith was then a mere child, not yet, we will hope, the wanton which she became in after-years. Æthelwulf was forty, she was fifteen; but otherwise the marriage was suitable enough. It would have been hard for Charles to find his daughter a royal spouse elsewhere than in England; for Carlings, her uncles or her cousins, sat upon all the thrones of the Continent.[2] Accordingly, on the return of Æthelwulf from Rome, in 856, the marriage between him and Judith was celebrated with great pomp by Hincmar in the royal palace of Verbérie.

This single result of Æthelwulf's cosmopolitan leanings was

[1] Ante, p. 248.

[2] On this account there is no reason for supposing, as Green does (*Conquest of England*, p. 82), that this marriage of Æthelwulf and Judith ratified any sort of alliance between Charles and the King of Wessex against the Vikings.

unfortunate: had very nearly proved disastrous. A section of the English leaders, ealdormen and thanes—we have already seen how through jealousy of a French queen, or for some other cause,[1] they made a party and chose Æthelbald, the crown prince, as king; and when Æthelwulf returned he was confronted with the accomplished fact of a rebellion, Æthelbald having actually assumed the sovereignty. Here was a condition of affairs which seemed to reproduce the troubles of the Frankish Empire some six-and-twenty years earlier. Once more a second marriage with a young wife the cause of it, the stepson at the head of the rebellion: and the young wife in each case, so it chances, has the same name, Judith. No wonder that historians, who love parallels, have seen in Ecgberht a lesser Charlemagne and in Æthelwulf the counterpart in character of Charlemagne's son, Lewis the Pious.

But mark how the English moderation and spirit of compromise overcame the danger. Æthelwulf with a noble *Entsagen* consented to yield the better half of his kingdom to his new-crowned son, and for the rest of his reign to content himself with the kingdom of Kent, while Æthelbald ruled in Wessex. Certainly the Viking terror which was, so to say, hovering round all the English coast (north in the marsh country as well as here in Wessex and Kent) should have disposed all patriotic spirits to seek a compromise which might leave the forces of the kingdom unimpaired.

A.D. 851. For all this time the outward danger was assuming fresh and more threatening forms. The very year of that great victory at Ockley saw an event of still greater significance and of exactly an opposite tendency, that is to say the first wintering of the Danes on English soil, on the island

A.D. 853. of Thanet. We have already spoken of that event, have compared it with like events upon the Continent and measured its significance. Two years after

[1] If Æðelwulf, previous to his second marriage, had repudiated Osburh, the mother of his sons, there would of course be reason enough for the rebellion of Æðelbald. On this doubtful point Freeman accepts the theory of repudiation (*Dict. Nat. B. s.v.* Ælfred), which Pauli decisively rejects. *Alfred the Great* (Wright) p. 88.

the English made a desperate attempt to drive the strangers forth. But they failed. And in 855 or 856 the Vikings changed their winter quarters from Thanet to Sheppey. They were now under the command of three leaders whose names were to be words of terror in every English household in the years to come—three sons of Ragnar Lodbrok they are called, Halfdan, Ivar, and Ubbe.[1] A.D. 855.

There were no further attacks of importance until the coming of Weland's fleet to the Wessex coast in the interval of its awaiting the completion of a compact with Charles the Bald for the attack upon the Vikings of the Seine. Weland's fleet took, as we saw, Winchester by storm, but was afterwards defeated. This was in 860. A.D. 860.

Meantime Æthelwulf had died (858) and been succeeded by Æthelbald. During the short reign of this king the land had peace. But now the time drew near when there was to be a complete change in the character of the Viking attacks on England. Remember that by this time large tracts of country in Scotland and Ireland had been subdued by the Norsemen, who had formed almost a new nation in Caithness, in the Orkneys, the Hebrides, and in Ireland. It was time for the Danes to try the same policy. Among the Danes on the Continent, in Frisia and in Francia (these last most of all whom Charles's continual harassing had begun to wear out), the news passed round that a great expedition was fitting out for England.

III.

An *avant-garde* of the great invading army came to Thanet in 865 and wintered there. The men of Kent were unable to meet them in the field; but they did what the King of France had long been constrained to do—they offered to purchase their retreat by a heavy ransom. The Vikings agreed; but while the ransom was collecting they stole from their camp and marched through the greater part A.D. 865.

[1] *AS. Chron.* 853; *Ann. Lindisf.* 855 (Pertz, xix. 506).

of Kent plundering and burning.[1] Never before had the northern pirates found the way so open before them. Æthelwulf, as we have seen, had been dead since 858—two years after his second marriage. His eldest son, Æthelbald, who had nearly brought such trouble upon the country, was dead also: he was, we may believe, no incapable ruler, for during his short reign the English were untroubled by Viking attacks. Æthelberht, the third son, was nearing the end of his reign. He, too, was to be spared the great coming trouble. For this fleet which came to Kent in 865–6 was no more than an *avant-garde* of a far more imposing one which in the latter year had been collecting for the invasion of our country. Vikings from the Rhine mouth, Vikings from the Scheld, the Somme, the Seine, drew together at the sound of the preparations which were going forward among the Danes of the Continent. They were growing tired of their monotonous life. Here was a new and a great adventure, the veritable conquest (for this they promised themselves) of one of the great states of Christendom.

From the accounts which our chronicles give us we should gather that up till now the great majority of the Viking raids in England had been directed against the southern counties. But the chronicles of the north have not been so well preserved, and it is quite possible that a number of attacks in the north have gone unrecorded.[2] From a hint here and there we may gather that Northumbria had been subject to them. She had long been in a most anarchical condition. One of her kings about this time is reported (though not on very good authority) to have been slain by the Vikings. How the middle parts of England had fared we cannot tell. There is only one recorded attack upon the marsh country up to the year at which we are now arrived, 866.

Certainly one would say that no part of England lay more inviting to attack than the rich flat region of the east coast,

[1] The likeness of this proceeding to that of Weland's Danes in France (A.D. 860) is to be noted; as, in truth, are the constant parallelisms in the history of the Continental and English Vikings.

[2] Simeon of Durham records no Viking attacks between the first attack on Lindisfarne and the coming of the Army.

where many river mouths and arms of the sea led far inland, in those days led the way to the great lagoons of the marsh country. For where now lie level fields furrowed by the plough, neatly bordered by their long, straight dykes, then lay great shallow inland lakes—beautiful lakes, *pulcherrimæ paludes*, Henry of Huntingdon calls them, who knew them well; beautiful and lonely, the haunt of the snipe and bittern. And on the borders of the lakes, or rising like islands out of them, stood some of the greatest religious houses of the England of those days, Bardeney, Croyland, Peterborough, Ely, Huntingdon—each visible from one or more of the others, and thus seeming to entice the adventurer farther and farther into the interior.

It was from this eastern coast that men, in the autumn of 866, saw approaching, with all sails set, the largest fleet which had yet ever made for this country. Henceforth these new Viking invaders always in the Chronicle go by the name of *the* Army or the Great Army; and, in truth, their course was as disastrous as ever in modern days was the course of the *Grande Armée* in Germany or Russia. It is the deeds of this army, and the answering achievements which these deeds called forth from the English, which make the most remarkable page in our history, between the rise of the house of Ecgberht and the Norman Conquest. Ivar[1] and Ubbe were among the leaders in this great fleet. Had they come to exact vengeance on the Northumbrians for the death of their father? We cannot tell. If so, why did they settle down for the winter of 866–7 in the East Anglian country to which they first came? Yet, if they had no special reason for attacking Northumbria, why did they leave the rich churches and religious houses which lay so near them, and undertake a long journey to the north? The English had their own tradition of the cause of the fall of the Northumbrian kingdom.[2] Ac- A.D. 866.

[1] Ivar is variously styled in the *Saxon Chron.* Inwær (A), Ingwær (B), Inwer (C), Iwer (D). And some of the late Icelandic Sagas of Ragnar Lodbrok have made two persons out of this one. See *Fornaldar Sögur.*

[2] Geof. Gaimar, *Estoire*, v. 2591 *sqq.*; Boeth. *Hist. Scot.*

cording to this story, the coming of the Danes was the work of one of Osberht's chief thanes, Björn Butsecarl, and he wrought this treachery to his country to take vengeance on the king, who had violated his bed. The legend is met with too commonly attaching to the last of some royal race, the overthrow of a great people by new conquerors. It is the legend of Roderic, the last of the Visigoths.[1] We must relegate it therefore to the region of mythology. Sooth to say, no remote reasons, no dramatic incidents are necessary to account for faction and treachery in the Northumbria of those days. That once famous kingdom, the light of whose learning and piety had shone over the whole of Europe, had for more than a century[2] been sinking lower and lower amid contending factions, and had now fallen on sad and evil days. Two rival kings claimed the suffrages of the people, Osberht, the legitimate king, and that Ælla[3] whom tradition points to as the murderer of Ragnar Lodbrok. Too much distracted by internal troubles to have an eye for what was going on elsewhere, the inhabitants of Northumbria seem to have known nothing of the approach of the Great Army till it was almost upon them. The Vikings had followed the practice which they had long used in France; they took horses from the peasantry round about, and with these they made their march northwards, probably along the old Roman road, Ermine Street, which leads up to Brough Ferry over the Humber. They crossed the Humber unopposed, and by the first of November, 867, they had taken possession of York. All over the country spread their bands, plundering and burning.[4]

March, 868. At the sight of this foreign danger the two rival kings composed their differences and united their

[1] It is also related of Ælla, the rival of Osberht, *cf.* Lappenberg, *o.c.*, i. 300, *note.* This fact gives it, certainly, more and not less verisimilitude. The Codrinus of the story would be, as Lappenberg says, Gotrum (Guthorm), who figures so much in the myths of this period—of Rollo? (Dudo), and Harald? (Haralds Saga).

[2] Stubbs points out how of the eight kings of Northumbria who reigned between A.D. 737 and 796, not one died a natural death upon the throne. *Const. Hist.*, vol. i.

[3] 'Ungecyndne cyning,' *AS. Chr.*

[4] *AS. Chr.*, 866; Sim. Dur. *H. D. E.* c. vi.

armies for the sake of laying siege to the Danes in the capital. Then it was, as I judge, that the Danes put in practice their favourite manœuvre of the sham flight in the midst of a battle. They came out before the town to engage the Northumbrians; but anon, seeming to give way, they fled within the walls of the city. The English pursued, their two kings—as one is glad to see—leading them. Then, when a number had got within the city, the Danes rallied: they shut to the gates and fell upon the band which had got within. It was a massacre; all the English perished, among them Osberht and Ælla, the rival kings of Northumbria.[1] And, save in name, the English kingdom of Southern Northumbria (Deira) ceased to exist.

After this victory the Danes spread northward and plundered as far as the Tyne, and the Northumbrians of the northern division (Bernicia) made peace without striking a blow. An Englishman, Ecgberht, was placed as king of this portion of the land. Later in the year, the Great Army, abandoning all care about its fleet, set out upon a long march into the interior of England.[2] It was a new sight for Englishmen, this serried array of well-drilled soldiers, armed (as no doubt they were) with all the latest fashion of armour, offensive or defensive, known in the Frankish Empire—a perpetual army, a standing army of veterans, to which they had nothing to oppose except their militia, called the fyrd. Unopposed, the Vikings marched into Mercia and set themselves down for winter quarters right in the centre of England, at Nottingham. Very different was the condition of the March-Kingdom (Mercia) in the politics of England from that which it held when the first Viking ship had touched the English coast. Then the victorious Offa sat upon the Mercian throne; the king of Wessex had humbly sought his friendship and had obtained his help to drive from the kingdom his rival Ecgberht. Since then Ecgberht had returned, reigned gloriously, and died. A century's rivalry

[1] The Norse Saga makes Ælla receive the punishment of the blood-eagle.

[2] Asser *Vita Ælf.* and *Chron.* s. a. As almost all the history of this period comes originally from Asser, it will not be necessary to multiply references.

between Mercia and Wessex had ended victoriously for the latter, and now it was the turn of the Mercian king to crave the friendship of his brother of Wessex.

A.D. 853. The king, Burgred by name, had before now obtained the help of Æthelwulf, the West Saxon king, against the Welsh, his neighbours.[1] The disturbance, the sense of insecurity, which the pirate raids on England had already awakened, roused the slumbering fires of rebellion among the Welsh. We saw how an early Viking band allied itself with the Cornishmen (the West Welsh) against Ecgberht. Following that precedent, the North Welsh, the Welsh proper, rose against Burgred; Burgred had appealed for assistance, as against a common danger, to the West Saxon ruler, and the two kings marched together to chastise the Britons. The political alliance was supplemented by an alliance of blood, for Burgred married Æthelswyth, the daughter of Wessex.

Now, in this new strait brought by the invasion of the Danes, and against a new and common danger to England, the Mercian king appealed once more to his Southern neighbour. His father-in-law, the two elder of his kingly brothers-in-law, had worn the crown and died. The third, Æthelred, now reigned in Wessex; and by his side stood the *secundarius* of the kingdom, his next brother, Ælfred, of whom England, and the Danes too, were to hear much in the coming years. At present he was twenty years of age, and had just married the daughter of Ealdorman Æthelred of Mercia.

The West Saxon princes assembled their troops, marched northward, and united their army with Burgred's before the walls of Nottingham. But, alas! the English were hopelessly ill-provided with the machinery and the knowledge for the conduct of a siege. Arts which had been making no small advance on the Continent, now that the Northmen had learned to make their camps impregnable and Charles had begun to fortify his river banks, were strange to them. The Danes were most of them fresh from the continent and from the lessons to be learnt there. They made themselves unassailable behind

[1] *AS. Chron.* 853.

the walls of Nottingham, and lay awaiting the result. Still, a blockade was always open to the English, and no help was likely to come to the invaders.

The English armies sat down before Nottingham, meaning to besiege it after this manner. This time the English leaders showed no more perseverance or determination than the Vikings had been accustomed to meet with in Francia. They offered just the same terms which Charles the Bald would have offered. When the Vikings on the Seine or the Loire were hard pressed, the worst lot they need dread was leave to retire into Frisia or to any other spot not in the territory of Charles the Bald. With a like weakness of policy, of the Danes in Nottingham, when famine obliged them to come to terms, no more was required than that they should retreat out of Mercia.

Whereupon they returned once more to York. There they were complete masters of the country. A.D. 869–870. And for one year, 869–870, the Vikings remained in Northumbria, exacting tribute, and settling to some extent the government of the kingdom. Some part of the army even seems to have begun to colonize here.

In 870 a portion of the army was again on Mercian ground. It sailed from York to Lindsay—the marshy district in South Lincolnshire. And presently began the plundering of the abbeys and cathedrals of the marsh country. Bardeney was plundered and burnt, and all its community of monks was slain. Meantime, another contingent of the Great Army marched by land to East Anglia, and took winter quarters at Thetford. The ravages of the Lincoln army continued. It was in Mercian territory; but Burgred, we may guess, feeling how impossible it was for him to relieve these outlying portions of his kingdom, chose rather to look the other way and let the plunderings go on. We have a somewhat minute account of the doings of the Vikings in the marsh country. Unfortunately, the source is worthless—the well-known supposititious Ingulf of Croyland. According to that account, which we give as narrative, not as history, Lincolnshire found among her own great men, thanes and prelates, four champions, three

earls of renown, Algar, Morcar, and Osgod; Brother Toli of Croyland, who, in earlier days, had been a thane and a famous man of war, but had now just taken the tonsure. Toli left his cloister once more for the field, and brought with him a host of men who had fled to Croyland Abbey. In all, a force of about 8,000 men assembled under the English standards. The Danish host—a part only of the Great Army—was far less numerous; but it contained only men of approved valour, used to desperate straits, men who had often retrieved the day of battle when all seemed lost. Were it not so, rashly indeed had they broken down their bridges and burnt their boats, to find themselves in the midst of an enemy's country, where defeat should mean annihilation.

A.D. 870. On St. Maurice's day (Sept. 22), 870, the armies joined battle. It was a desperate fight; three of the Viking leaders fell and a multitude of lesser men. At last the Danes were slowly driven back to their camp. But here they made a stand; they set up that impregnable shield-burg of theirs, and night fell while they were still unbroken. And now was shown the profit of that unquenchable valour which would not yield though the odds seemed desperate; so different from the hare-like timidity, starting at every shadow, which had begun to possess the soldiers of Charles the Bald. Hopeless seemed the case with this small band of Danes when they measured themselves against the numbers of their adversaries and thought of to-morrow's dawn and the renewal of the attack. Yet that day's long stand had saved them. For that very night beheld a fresh army marching into their camp—a fresh army, new landed from the coasts of France or Frisia. Five kings commanded in it, Guthrum, Baegseg, Osketil,[1] Halfdan, and Hamond,[1] and many earls. The troops were no doubt the flower of the Viking armies on the continent, the most adventurous, the most eager for conquest. Very different was the confidence of the Danes when morning dawned from what it had been at nightfall. They did not wait

[1] So the narrative, but Osketil and Hamund (Agmund) are probably a pure mistake, caused by following Simeon of Durham, *l. c.*

to be attacked, but sallied forth against the English, whose turn it was now to remain on the defensive. And the English did remain unshaken for many hours, as at Hastings and Waterloo. But as the afternoon wore on, the Danes had recourse once more to that manœuvre of theirs which had already decided the day at York. Like Duke William's Normans at a later day, they seemed to turn and fly, and like Harald's soldiers, the troops of Morcar and Algar were drawn from their defence to follow the fugitives. Then all was lost. The Vikings turned and fell upon the English with unappeasable fury. Half went down at once. Algar and Toli were able to gather a small band and make their shield-burg upon a neighbouring mound. It availed them little. They could not hold out against the Viking arms, and the English army was almost totally destroyed. A few saved themselves by flight to a neighbouring wood and escaped under the shadow of night.[1]

And now the further destruction of monasteries ensued. Bardeney we know had fallen. Croyland's turn came next. Fugitives from the battle not far off brought to the monks the terrible news of the English defeat. The monks had time to escape if they would. The Abbot Theodore and some of the elder monks, it is said, chose rather to suffer martyrdom at their posts—like Blaithmac of old on Iona, like Gunhard, the Bishop of Nantes.[2] As they were in the act of celebrating the mass (so goes the story) the Danes burst upon them; King Osketil hewed down the abbot; all the rest of the monks were slain. Only one little boy was saved by a Viking earl, Sidroc. He is the one supposed to give an account of the scene.

From Croyland the towers of Peterborough or Medhampstead beckon invitingly across the marshes, and thither the Vikings now proceeded. They brought the siege artillery of those days against the walls of the abbey, which were soon

[1] This narrative, as we have said above, cannot be accepted as history. But there is considerable verisimilitude in it.

[2] See p. 250.

broken down. The abbot and all the monks were slain. Worse almost than the robbery and the burning of the ancient pile (a burning which lasted fourteen days) was the destruction of the library which it contained, of who knows what precious materials for history, unrecoverable now. From Peterborough the army went to Huntingdon, and from Huntingdon to Cambridge. In the first was an abbey, in the second was a bishop's palace; both were burned to the ground.

Sad indeed must have been the sight of these fires flaring over the 'beautiful marshes' which lay all around. From Cambridge the Vikings could see, rising out of the surrounding waters, Ely, an island comparable in size to the Isle of Man, a real island in those days up to which the sea spread; though the water was shallow and brackish, and from its shallowness haunted by an abundance of eels, from which the island took its name. We have two pictures of this monastery: one from more than a hundred years before this onslaught of the Danes, the other an equal distance after it; in each the island monastery stands out for a moment clearly and pleasantly from the mists of the past. The Ely monastery was built by Queen Æthelthryth (St. Audrey), the virgin wife of King Ecgfrith of Northumbria. When she retired altogether from the world, she set about raising this shrine. It was in East Anglia; she was an East Anglian princess. When Æthelthryth died they desired to bury her in her cloister in a stone coffin as befitted her rank. But there were no stones upon the island large enough for the purpose. Accordingly some of the monks (monasteries were for both sexes in those days) 'entered a ship, and came to a small abandoned city which in the language of the English is called Grantaceaster,' and outside the city walls they found a white marble coffin, most beautifully wrought and covered with a lid of the same kind of marble. Grantaceaster (we judge by its termination) must once have been a Roman town, now long since ruined, and rediscovered, so to say, by these Ely monks in the early years of the eighth century, who had rowed over thither from their island. Let the undergraduate of to-day who 'tools'

over to Ely bear in mind this picture of Cambridge (or Grantchester if you will[1]) with its ruined and deserted walls, lying beside the great lagoon; and Ely rising up visible sixteen miles off out of the water.

Since that date Cambridge had, as we have seen, gotten its bishop's palace, which was now destined to be burned by the Danes. But the waters stood and were to stand for many long years reflecting the walls and towers of Ely on their bosom. For the second picture which comes one hundred and fifty years or so after the Danish raid is that far more familiar one, which all the history-books give us, of the chanting voices of the monks of Ely sounding pleasantly over the waters to King Cnut as he rowed thereby.

> Merie sangen the muneches binnen Ely
> Tha Cnut ching rew ðerby.[2]

This too is a picture which can never be realized again.

And now we return to the Great Army. No reliable account which we can recover gives us the confused scene of blood and wrath which marked the fall of Ely, the last of the five great monasteries which it assaulted. Meantime we have left upon one side the other Viking camp at Thetford which, so far as appears, had up to now remained pretty quiet. The English had made one attack upon it; but they were driven off and lost their leader Ealdorman Ulfcetil. The Danes in Ely and the Danes of Thetford were both in the dominions of the king of East Anglia, whose name (famous above all the names of those who suffered in these days) was Eadmund. This Eadmund has grown into a mythic figure. We cannot now tell *why* he, above all who suffered martyrdom from the Danes, should have been held in such honour—honour to the point of beatification and worship as an immortal almost immediately after his death. As Carlyle says, 'What Eadmund's specific duties were, above all what his method of discharging them with such results was, would be interesting to

[1] Cambridge is generally Grantabrigge, after it has become a Saxon town.
[2] *Hist. Ælfens*, ii. 28.

know; but are *not* very discoverable now.' Eadmund had carried on his government, but felt himself perhaps since that victory of the Danes over Algar and Morcar no longer able to cope with the invaders with any chance of success. At last the Thetford army under Ivar and Ubbe marched farther into his territory. We are told that the king came out to fight against them and was defeated.[1] We know at any rate that he fell into their hands, into the hands of the two sons of Ragnar, Ivar and Ubbe, refusing to forsake his creed, and was put to death—with cruel tortures, as some reported. The tradition a century later ran that he had been tied to a tree and shot to death[2]—an English S. Sebastian; or, shall we say, a Christian Balder? And almost immediately after his death the devotion of the people to his memory began to show itself: first, in the innumerable coins with the legend *Sancti Eadmundi* which had been struck in his honour before the next century was many years old;[3] next in the splendid abbey which rose over his burial-place. He led his conquerors captive. The great Danish King of England, Cnut, came to adore the bones of him his ancestors had tortured, took the golden diadem from his own head and placed it on the tomb of the saint. Eadmund's abbey became among the three or four greatest in England. *Requiescat in pace.* Strange that we shall never learn the title by which he remained thus planted in the hearts of his countrymen.

IV.

The martyrdom of S. Eadmund was the only important achievement of the army in the autumn of this year, 870. According to the book of the passion of S. Eadmund it took place on the 20th of November. We may suppose that in the cold winter months the Danes remained quietly in East Anglia making themselves at home in the comfortable East

[1] Asser, p. 20 (Wise).

[2] Or shot at with arrows and finally beheaded, Abbo, *Vita S. Eadm.* (A.D. 985).

[3] See *Cat. Eng. Coins in the British Museum*, C. F. Keary, pp. xxix, xxx, 97–137.

Anglian farms and in the country which now knew no other lord. But early in the following year they set out upon a new field of conquest. And now begins the crisis of this drama of the invasion of the Great Army. For now they, that is to say a large section of the Army,[1] crossed the Thames and came into the country of the greatest of the English kings—the King of Wessex. Mercia was almost at their disposal; Northumbria and East Anglia were conquered. Should Wessex fall the whole of England would be theirs, the course of history would have rolled back, Christianity would have been driven out of the land, the days of Æthelfrith the Fierce or of Penda would have returned. A.D. 871.

In their first movements the Danes showed their military skill. They crossed the Thames at a point nicely chosen to cut the kingdom of Wessex in two—to double the difficulties of Æthelred in the raising of an opposing army. This point was Reading.[2] There was a castle, say small *castrum*, there; and the Danes were soon able to fortify themselves sufficiently to defy the English attacks. The town lies upon a point of land at the junction of the Thames and the Kennet. The Northmen drew a *vallum* from one river to the other. I have said that they showed good generalship; but we must make the proviso that it was of a kind in conformity with their usual tactics. They were wont to think always of attack, little of defence; little of securing a base, or of their commissariat. They trusted to find provision for their troops in the hostile country. Nevertheless in the present case the river served them as a means of communication with their fleet; as a line of retreat and a possible source of supplies. But they could hardly have told, and we at this day cannot tell, how far the river could be relied upon as a means of transport when, for example, the summer should come and the stream run low.

The West Saxons did not wait long to attack the new

[1] Guthorm did not take part in this first invasion of Wessex.

[2] 'The country which was to form the scene of the coming struggle was the square rough forest country for which the abundance of *bearroc* or box trees among its woodland gained the name of Berkshire' (Green, *Conquest of England*, p. 98).

invaders. The Berkshire fyrd under Ealdorman Æthelwulf caught, at Englefield, a body that had ridden into the next county to explore and forage, and gained a victory. Soon the word came that the king was coming, and anon Æthelred and Ælfred, with such forces as they had been able to raise, marched up and encamped before Reading. They did not at once attack the stronghold; but every one who ventured out was slain, and the Danes were cooped up like wolves in a hole. But suddenly the gates of the Danish fort opened, the Vikings rushed forth, and a furious battle began. Before long the English began to waver, and in the end Æthelred and Ælfred and their troops were driven back as far as Wistley Green, and would have suffered still more had they not found a ford—just opposite Windsor—which was unknown to the Danes, and by that escaped across the river.[1] An ill beginning. Ealdorman Æthelwulf, who had just before triumphed at Englefield, was killed in this engagement. Four days later Æthelred and Ælfred returned with fresh levies. They were determined to try another battle to protect this portion of their kingdom. If they lost it there was small chance that on this side of Wessex they would be able to make a further stand. Beyond Selwood, no doubt, they could still have held out for a time. But Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, and half Wiltshire would fall as completely as East Anglia had fallen.

The Danes had already advanced westward along the high chalk ridge of Berkshire. They attached equal importance with the English to the coming battle; and except a moderate garrison left in camp we may believe that their whole force marched to the field. This field of battle was a place called Ashdown, lying upon the chalk downs of Berkshire. In two wings the Danish army was drawn up: one under the command of the two kings of Northumbria (kings elect as it were, for they had hardly yet taken possession) Halfdan[2] and Bægsæg; the other

[1] 'E Edelred e Elvereth
Furent chascés a Wisceslet
Eo est un gué vers Windesoveres'
(Geof. Gaimar, *Estoire d. E.*, 2963, *sqq.*).

[2] *AS. Chron.*, 871. I do not know why Green substitutes Guthorm for Halfdan throughout the history of this year, *o. c.* p. 98.

led by five earls—Asbjörn, Fræne, Harald, and the elder and younger Sihtric. Wherefore the English army likewise divided into two. One division, under Æthelred, faced that commanded by the kings; the other, under the *Secundarius*, the Ætheling Ælfred, faced the wing of the earls.

The Danes had chosen the best position. They had in truth been the first in the field, and already lay between the English army and its base. They were, too, on the upper slope of the down. And now they were moving downwards through the thick brushwood,[1] shooting their arrows and hurling their spears before them as they advanced to the charge. Prince Ælfred was alert. But when he looked towards the king's division, Æthelred was not yet there; he was, in fact, hearing mass, and would not move until the service was at an end.[2] Meantime the Danes were drawing nearer and nearer, especially that wing which stood opposite Ælfred's division.[3] The prince could not wait longer for his brother's word of command. On his own responsibility he gave the signal to charge, and he himself, all the berserk fury upon him,[4] 'like a wild boar,' rushed up the hill at the head of his men. Happily now Æthelred had done his mass, and his division too moved forward. There was a certain thorn-tree, pointed out in after-years as the place where the greatest shock of battle was felt. At last, thank God, the enemy were seen to waver and break. With tremendous slaughter, they were pushed back, and finally

[1] Of box? See above.

[2] Historians are wont to be very sarcastic over this scene. But it may be paralleled from the history of Rome in her greatest days, when the general of the Republic, in a battle against the Ætolians, was observed to spend his time in sacrificing and praying to the gods.

[3] Both Pauli, *o. c.* p. 135, and Green, *o. c.* p. 102, represent the English as storming the Danish position. But I do not see how this is to be inferred from the words of Asser: '*Cum rex in oratione diutius moraretur et Pagani parati ad locum certaminis citius advenissent, Ælfred tunc secundarius cum diutius hostiles acies ferre non posset, nisi aut bello retrorsum recederet, aut contra hostiles copias ante fratris adventum in bellum prorumperet*' . . . . (p. 22).

[4] For the berserk fury was no monopoly of the Northmen, rather an inheritance of all the Teutonic race; as Cæsar, Plutarch, or Tacitus can show us.

driven over the crest and across the hollows of the downs, the English still pursuing—pursuing, the account says, for a day and a night. One wonders that any of the Vikings escaped from such a carnage. Never before, our chronicler assures us, had taken place such a slaughter of the heathen—no, not at Ockley, till now the greatest victory which the English had won. The little purple flower which the English in after-years called Danes'-blood ought to have grown plentifully hereafter on these downs. Yet some of the Danes did escape, and found their way to Reading. They were still strong enough to hold their camp.

Here, in this battle of Ashdown, Ælfred won his spurs. His had been the greater share of the battle, and the longest tale of slaughtered foes. *One* of the two kings, indeed, who were opposed to Æthelred had fallen; but there had likewise fallen *all* the five earls who had led the wing opposite to Ælfred's. Only Halfdan remained to guard the camp. But for the memory of this victory, one can hardly think that the English would have nerved themselves to the long struggle which still lay before them ere the Danes were driven out of Wessex.

For the resolution of the Danes was unconquerable; they were not to be discouraged by one defeat, however disastrous. They must, without doubt, have received reinforcements by the river during the next two weeks. At the end of that short time we see them taking the offensive once more, and gaining a victory over the English at Basing, in Hampshire. Two months later, another battle was fought at Merton. The English were successful at the outset; but by the end of the day the Danes had regained their position and held the field. In the English army, Bishop Heahmund, of Sherbourne, was slain.

In this wise passed the early months of the year 871, the beginning of the long harvest season of the Danes. Before the year grew old King Æthelred died, and on the shoulders of the Ætheling Ælfred, yet only twenty-two, fell the burden of defending his people against the Danish wolves, who, in

ever-increasing numbers, poured down on the devoted land. We have seen Ælfred raging like a wild boar on the field of Ashdown. Yet, with a strength and a martial ardour which made him a true son of the royal house of Wessex, Ælfred was afflicted by a strange illness, a thorn in the flesh, such as saints and heroes—St. Pauls, Alexanders, Cæsars, Mahomets, Gustavus Adolphuses—have often to bear. The affliction had come upon him in his youth, and had re-appeared again two years ago, on the occasion of his marriage with a Mercian lady, Ealswyth, daughter of Æthelred, lord of the Gaini. We do not know the nature of the illness; only that while upon him it left the king weak as a child. And in all the following years of trouble—now meeting the invaders hand to hand, now hiding from them, and, in the secret recesses of the woods, preparing to strike another blow—let not in our picture of the heroic young king the recollection of this added affliction, these moments of utter physical exhaustion, worse than mere pain, be wanting.[1] There is something pathetic, too, in the thought of Ælfred as the last of all the sons of Æthelwulf. Of the whole family of brave young princes who had once gathered round the throne, he only was left, this youth of twenty-two; the voices which in earlier days might have given or taken counsel with him all silent.

The real affliction of England, that which seemed to make our case so hopeless, lay in the continued influx of fresh hordes of invaders into the country. It seemed as if there were no limit to the supply of these wolves of the north. A generation had passed since the Vikings had begun to find themselves secure settlements along all the Frisian and Frankish coasts. Young men had grown up to manhood, inured to this life and to no other. The Vikings, who were once isolated bands of adventurers, now almost formed a nation, and it was a nation in arms, like that which, in '93 and the years which followed, swept away the barriers raised by the princes of the Continent, routed the most skilful of Austrian generals, and poured into

[1] We are not, it is true, obliged to accept Asser's account of this. *Cf.* Pauli, *l. c.*, p. 121, *note*.

Switzerland and Italy. Even a small band of such heroes was terrible to the peasant-soldiery of England.

Some time was needfully spent by the new king over the obsequies of his brother, whose tomb was raised at Wimborne. Meantime a new 'summer-host' (such is the name for the usual Viking expedition, which, when summer began, used to set out vaguely in search of plunder) had reached our shores. It ascended the Thames, and joined its crew with the remains of the Great Army which lay at Reading. Vain had been the slaughter of Ashdown. The army was now strong enough to march deep into the West Saxon territory, and harry on all sides almost unopposed. This was the sight which confronted Ælfred when, a month after the death of Æthelred, he again took the field. He had now to abandon the eastern parts of Wessex to their own devices for offence; for the Danish army had advanced far westward, and it was at Wilton, that little forlorn town upon the Willy, then the capital of the Wilsætas, that they next encountered the English. Once more an old manœuvre won the day. The English had been pushing their opponents back; suddenly the Viking army turned and fled; the English, alas! pursued in hot haste, only to see their adversaries rallying again at a given point, themselves to be taken in disorder and defeated. For the moment this was a decisive victory. Ælfred was as powerless against the invaders as Charles the Bald had become after the Oissel disaster. He had no resource but that which was such a common one in France, a heavy bribe.

At all events, Ælfred and his English could reflect that they had not yielded easily to this expedient, nor at once. Nowhere abroad had men to bear such heavy and continued attacks as had fallen upon England of late, and on Wessex last of all. In the course of the last year, Æthelred and Ælfred and their subjects had fought eight pitched battles and countless skirmishes with this implacable enemy; they had almost annihilated one army, and had killed a large number of the Danish leaders—one king, if not more, and nine earls.[1] But fresh

[1] Asser (Wise) p. 25.

troops and fresh leaders always came in to supply the places of the old. Nevertheless, the Danes themselves may have been glad to call a truce and receive their *danegeld*, and to turn against less stubborn bands of English militia.

They crossed the Thames, and marched upon London which had long been included in the kingdom of Mercia. It seems they took the city; for a coin of their leader, Halfdan, probably struck in this year, was struck in London. It bears in a monogram the word 'Londonia.'[1] The Mercian king could do nothing. He paid his *danegeld* as Ælfred had done, and the fleet sailed north into Northumbria. Thence they went into Lincolnshire, and, in the neighbourhood of Torksey, spent the winter of 873–4. A.D. 872. A.D. 873.

Next year they were up again. Nothing availed the Mercians their treaty of the previous year and the fine they had paid. The Vikings marched from Torksey to Repton, one of the chief royal seats of Mercia, and the burial-place of her kings. The ancient abbey, where rested so many royal bones, was burnt by the invaders. Mercia lay at their disposal as fully as Northumbria had lain seven years ago; and, as they had done in Northumbria, the Danes now deposed the English king, Burgred, and raised up a puppet of their own. Ceolwulf, 'an unwise king's thane,' was placed upon the Mercian throne, and he took an oath to hold it at the pleasure of the conquerors. We may guess with what feelings Ælfred saw his brother-in-law thus dethroned and driven out of the land, and the second English kingdom falling wholly into Danish hands. Burgred set sail for Rome, and never saw his native shores again. After the driving forth of Burgred, the Viking army began to take all the measures befitting conquerors of a new country. It separated into two portions; one division marched under Halfdan back into Northumbria. There, says the Chronicle, Halfdan divided the land—divided, that is, partitioned it, between his own followers and the native A.D. 874.

[1] Kenyon, *Silver Coins of England*, p. 79.

English.[1] The latter were not entirely dispossessed; but their possessions shrank within narrower limits, and they descended to a social level below their conquerors. Where they had been full allodial owners, they became more like tenants by base tenure. And very soon a like fate befel Mercia. The Danes spread themselves over the land, and after a year or two's nominal reign, Ceolwulf was deprived of most of his territory. 'The Danes divided the land, and gave part to Ceolwulf.'[2] 'Such was the end,' says Pauli, 'of a kingdom which for a long period had disputed the supremacy with the West Saxons. Its precipitate fall, as well as the death of the last ruler, must have produced a deep impression upon Ælfred. He saw the old plans and aspirations of his race vitally endangered, and his sister doomed to a life of sorrow, after having been deprived of her husband and her crown.'

V.

Here perhaps would be the place (had one time) to speak of the admixture of Danish and English blood brought about by the settlement of the Danes in Northumbria, in East Anglia, and in Mercia. Worsaae has devoted himself, in the pages of a short work, to the task of following up the traces left by the Danes and Norsemen throughout the British Isles.[3] These traces are of many kinds: in the nomenclature of places, in new customs and laws introduced from the North, in new blood affecting the actual physique of the inhabitants of these islands. We must, however, remember that we have as yet arrived only at the beginning of the connection between the Scandinavian countries and England; that the Danish conquest of England in the eleventh century has yet to come, and that it would be impossible, without lengthy and tedious discussion, to decide which, among the more salient changes

[1] So, at least Steenstrup, *o. c.* i. 297.

[2] Green makes the reasonable suggestion that here we have the origin of the two Mercias—the English and the Danish—established a few years later by the Treaty of Wedmore.

[3] *Minder om de Danske og Nordmændene i England, &c.* (Copenhagen, 1851). Trs. *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, &c.* (London, 1852).

introduced here by the Northmen, are to be reckoned the work of the Vikings of our era, or of the Danes of a later date.

But how much the history of this present century paved the way for the subsequent history of the Danes in England may be judged from this one fact. It seems probable that when, a few years after the deposition of Burgred, the Danes (as the Chronicle tells us) divided Mercia and gave part to Ceolwulf, the division here made was the same which afterwards obtained after the peace of Wedmore; that is to say, that the portion of Mercia east of the Lea and Watling Street fell to the Danes, whereas the portion west of this dividing line remained subject to an English king.[1] But this was likewise the partition made between Cnut and Edmund Ironside, a century and a half later. From which we argue that the Danish England, which was now created by the Vikings, remained the Danish England which welcomed with enthusiasm the invasions of Sweyn and Cnut.

So far as concerns the districts where settlements of Norsemen and Danes have been most frequent in England, or, let us say, throughout the British Isles, these, it would seem, cannot be better determined than by an examination of place-names in Great Britain and Ireland.

Certain local names, more especially certain terminations of names which are common in this country, can easily be shown to owe their origin to the Northmen. Such, for example, are the terminations (or not necessarily terminations)—by (O.D. *byr*) thorp (*þorp*)—thwaite (*þveit*)—toft (*toft*)—beck (*bæk*)—ness (*næs*)—ey[2]—dale (*dál*)—force (*foss*)—fell (*fjæld*)—tarn (*tærn*)—hough or how (*haug*)—garth (*gaard*)—wick (*vík*)—ford.[3] Some of these terminations are peculiarly Norse, as

[1] Green, *Conquest of England*, p. 121, and Worsaae, *o. c.*

[2] Doubtful; but so, Worsaae.

[3] When used in the sense of a passage *up* a river-mouth or estuary *ford* is Danish; when it means only a passage *across* a river or brook it is AS. Fords of the former kind are Carlingford, Strangford, Wexford, and Waterford in Ireland.

thwaite, force, fell; others are more characteristic of the Danes as *toft, thorp,* and *by.*

The northern place-names and terminations again divide themselves into two groups. Some of them, such as *ey, ness, wick, ford, how, scar* (a cliff), and certain other words which, like these, speak of those natural features of a country which may be best discerned from the sea, tell more of the days of Viking piracy than of settlement and colonization. Other words belong to a settled life; such words are *by, garth, thorp, thwaite,* and in a less degree *force, fell.* In certain parts of Great Britain (*e.g.*, the North-West of England) the Viking names are more distinctly Danish, the settlement-names more Norse. It is not necessary to give instances of the occurrence of the various terminations I have mentioned in English place-names; half-a-dozen instances for every one will spring at once into the mind of the reader. And he will himself be able, if he choose, to trace in a map of the British Isles the localities where these various kinds of termination preponderate. If he wishes to arrive more easily at the main results of the inquiry he can turn to the work of Worsaae already cited, to Joyce's *Irish Place Names,* and to Canon Taylor's *Words and Places.*[1]

Worsaae gives in a table the results of an inquiry into the place-names having the first thirteen terminations cited above. The total number of places included in his table is 1373. Out of these the terminations in *by* constitute nearly half—604; wherefore this place-ending, as our own knowledge would naturally suggest to us, is by far the most important of all; it is eminently typical of the days of Danish settlement in England. When, therefore, we find that out of the 604 *bys* in Worsaae's list, no less than 379 come from Yorkshire and

[1] I grant that there is no reason why many of these Norse and Danish terminations should not have been bestowed in the course of succeeding centuries; seeing that such words as *thwaite, toft,* &c., had become incorporated in the speech of the English in North England. Such incorporation is itself evidence of a strong Danish or Norse infusion in the population; but that is not quite the same thing as the inference which Worsaae and Taylor draw from the terminations of place-names. Canon Taylor's work, too, must be used with caution, as the author has made several mistakes, *e.g.*, the noted instance of Saltaire.

Lincolnshire, while these counties likewise contain 697 names out of Worsaae's total—1373; it is evident that Yorkshire and Lincolnshire may claim to possess by far the greatest infusion of Danish blood. It is, in fact, in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire and in Lincolnshire, and next after these counties in Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottingham, and East Anglia, that we must look for the chief remains of Danish colonization in England. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, in Cumberland and Westmoreland, we find the traces of a Norse settlement which belongs probably to the century following the one with which we are dealing. Most likely it migrated thither from Ireland, at the time when the Norse kings in Ireland became likewise kings in Northumbria. Thus, of names with the termination *dale* which is characteristically Norse (so familiar to us in the name *dalesman*), we find in Worsaae's list out of a total of 142, 52 names from Cumberland and Westmoreland, and 40 from the West Riding of Yorkshire; and out of 95 examples of the still more characteristic *fell*,[1] 57 are from Cumberland and Westmoreland, and 21 from the West Riding —78, that is, out of 95.

In Scotland the Scandinavian names come wholly from the Norsemen, not from the Danes. The names in the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Caithness are almost exclusively Norse; as are the names in the lesser islands of the Hebrides (the Sudreyar) and over half the larger island, Lewis. There are traces of Norse settlement all round the coast of Scotland, and far into the interior of Sutherland and Ross. In Wales the names which betray a Scandinavian origin are comparatively few: as we might expect from the history of the principality. The Great Orme in North Wales is one conspicuous instance; a few names in South Wales, especially in Pembrokeshire—Milford, Haverford, Tenby, for example—almost make up the list. Of the Norse names in Ireland something has been already said.[2]

[1] Worsaae has only fifteen examples of *force* (*e.g.*, *Airey force*, &c.). But, such as these are, they belong exclusively to the N.-W. of England.

[2] Compare the map in Canon Taylor's *Words and Places*.

But now we must hurry on to watch the conclusion of the great drama which was to be fought out in Wessex. Remember now or never was the time for the Danes to possess themselves of the whole of England, to turn it into a Scandinavian state. Who knows what their future achievements might have been if they had raised up a great Viking kingdom here so close to the shores of France? All Europe was concerned in the issue of the struggle of the next few years; and if that issue hung upon the constancy of a single man, then it depended upon the King Ælfred. If he must have been deeply and gloomily impressed with what was going on north of the Thames, what, we may think, were the feelings of his subjects, who had already borne so many trials, achieved such deeds, all, as it seemed, in vain?

Now the Danes were divided into two armies, whose fields of labour henceforward lay nearly always apart. The Northumbrian Danes, under Halfdan, sought a fresh theatre of ravage. They crossed over to the western side of England and plundered in Strathclyde Britain, from the Mersey to the Clyde, and northward in the country of the Picts. The reign of the native princes of North Northumbria (Bernicia) seems to have still continued. But their power must have been little more than nominal.[1] Almost all the religious houses of Northumbria were destroyed. But the Christian bishops still sat at York.

A.D. 875. In the year 875 the southern portion of the Danish army—the northern division was with Halfdan in Strathclyde and Pictland—settled itself at Cambridge, under the command of Guthorm, Oskytel, and Amund (Anwynd). Ælfred, meanwhile, had not been idle. He had profited by the teaching of his enemies, for he had used the brief interval of rest to build a fleet to meet the foe upon their chosen element. He had, we may believe, employed his fleet with some success in guarding the southern coasts; we are, at all events, told of

[1] They struck no coins. (*Cat. Eng. Coins in British Museum*, p. 188.) Nevertheless, the settlement of Danes in Bernicia must have been more limited than in Deïra. See preceding page.

one occasion when he encountered a small squadron of six Viking ships[1] of which he captured one and put the rest to flight. But these small achievements were of little account against the fresh storm which was about to burst on Wessex.

In A.D. 876 the Cambridge army secretly took ship in the marsh country, sailed out to sea, and came at length to Wareham in Dorset.[2] It was a place strongly defended by nature, only to be attacked by land from the west, and the fleet held the sea—Ælfred's navy did not as yet feel strong enough to cope with it—so the supplies of the garrison were ensured. Henceforward, owing perhaps to Ælfred's ship-building, the Danes moved their army and their fleet more in conjunction than they had done during the earlier years of invasion; and in making this change of tactic we cannot doubt that they greatly strengthened their position, and paved the way for the successes which they now achieved. A.D. 876.

Ælfred marched against the Wareham Danes. But when the armies came in sight they did not engage; neither side seemed willing to risk a battle. The Danes thought probably that they could gain as much by stratagem. They made peace, and swore on holy ring and Christian relic to leave the kingdom.[3] But when Ælfred retired half of them stole away to Exeter and settled there. Exeter might be reckoned as still part of West Wales; though it had really been incorporated in Wessex long before now; and by a strained interpretation the Vikings might plead that they had still observed the terms of their oath.[4] In this event is illustrated the knowledge which the Vikings had acquired of England, and of the weak points in the English system of defence. *They* were always ready, slept,

[1] Six, Asser; seven, *AS. Chron.* (A.-E.).

[2] The account of this in both Asser and the *Chronicle* is rather absurd: *Her hiene bestæl se here into Werham* ('stole into Wareham'—from Cambridge!) *Paganorum exercitus noctu de Grantebrycge exiens, castellum quod dicitur Werham intravit.*

[3] They swore their solemn oath upon the holy *baug*—a ring placed upon a sort of altar (*cf. C. P. B.* i. 403, quotation from *Islendinga-bók*). They also took such oaths upon Christian relics as were desired (Asser).

[4] Green, *o. c.* p. 108.

we may say, upon their arms; but the English fyrd was called together for a definite purpose and for a limited time. The husbandman left his corn uncut, his fields untilled, to join the dragon banner of Wessex; his thoughts were with his home and, when the period of service had come to an end, nothing could keep him with his colours. Then was the chance for the Danes. It was mere folly for them to engage the English when fully prepared for battle; while a little ruse, a little delay, would throw the country at their mercy.

Ælfred now brought his fleet to blockade the Vikings in Exeter. But continued reinforcements came pouring in. Halfdan and Ivar 'after many slaughterings' (in their Strathclyde and Pictish war?) sailed round to Devon—so at least Asser says; but it seems likely there is some mistake here. Whether or no a large Viking fleet was coming from Wareham to raise the blockade of Exeter. But on their way 'a great fog meets them on the sea,' and the fog is followed by a storm, the storm is followed by an attack from Ælfred's fleet, and there in Swanage Bay the whole Danish armament of one hundred and twenty sail was destroyed.

Wherefore, after the siege of Exeter had lasted all the summer, the Danes had at length to submit. Humbly they took their departure, some for South Wales, some for Gloucestershire. Under Ubbe the Northmen made a furious attack upon Wales in the ensuing year. They were defeated at first in two battles, but in the end Rodrick Mawr the Prince of Wales had to abandon his country and flee to Ireland.

One famous victory crowned the arms of the English, under Ealdorman Odda, the following year, at 'Cynwith' —in Devonshire, we may suppose. Therein, the English took the banner of the Vikings, the raven banner which had been (so at least it was said[1]) woven by Lodbrok's daughters for Ivar and Ubbe, woven no doubt with mystic chants, like those which accompanied the making of the banner borne at Clontarf—

A.D. 877.

[1] Only in the Annals of Asser and the worst MSS. of the 'Life.'

Wide is wrought the web of slaughter,
The drooping spear-cloud[1] that raineth blood.

But even while this victory was being gained the English resistance was breaking down, hopelessly, finally as it seemed. Next year, as the Yule-tide feasts were beginning, news was brought that the Danish army, which had departed from Exeter and made its way into Gloucestershire, had returned thence into the country of the Wilsætas, navigated the Avon (the Bath Avon) we may suppose, and made itself a strong camp at Chippenham. And somehow, now the whole opposition to their movements seems to have collapsed. Ælfred was not wanting to himself, but his subjects, wearied out with their long vigil, their marchings and countermarchings, seemed to have given up hope, to have begun to think of submitting to the inevitable, as the Northumbrians and East Anglians and Mercians had submitted. They even began to quarrel among themselves, as the Irish so often did in the very face of the Northern invasions.[2] The Danes set to work to harry the country round Chippenham; Ælfred raised no army to oppose them, and they carried on their work unhindered.

Then came that darkest moment in the English annals and in the life of the king. All lost heart, except Ælfred the king, him and a few chosen followers. Of their forlorn wanderings about the dark marshy regions of Devonshire and Somerset, and their adventures therein, history and mythology love to tell. After a while Ælfred settled down with a small band of followers upon a little island made at the junction of the Tone and the Parret, two Somersetshire rivers. There he made himself a fort, like the forts which the Danes themselves had been wont to raise in the enemy's country. Such it was to him. How strangely the tables have been turned, when the Vikings appear as the masters of the country, and the rightful king of Wessex skulks like an outlaw, hidden amid the woods and morasses, making his sallies upon the enemy when opportunity

[1] The banner supported, as was the fashion, upon two spears is likened to a cloud overhanging the army and raining down blood.

[2] Æthelwerd a. a. 886, see Lappenberg, *Hist of Eng.* (trs.) ii. 53.

shows itself! That island where the fires of patriotism, which had burnt so low everywhere else were still kept alive, is a sacred place for all Englishmen, worthy of a pilgrimage, not less holy than those rocks which sheltered the last heirs of the Gothic race, when the Arabs became masters of Spain; than the lake beside which the bravest of the Swiss met to plot the deliverance of their country. It gained its name from its use now, and became the Æthelney, or Princes' Island—now an island no more. There was found in 1693 the jewel inscribed with 'Ælfred ordered me to be made,' which Oxford now guards.

A.D. 878. The loss of the single battle at Cynwith, or even of a magic woven banner could do nothing to damp the spirit of the Danes in Guthorm's camp. And high revel, we need not doubt, was held at Chippenham all this springtime of 878, where the country seemed so utterly subdued, while the leaves were budding in Selwood Forest. But when the leafy screen was thick, Ælfred had stolen from his island, had called together the men of Somersetshire, and Wiltshire, and Hampshire. Of a sudden a new army has burst from the dense forest shades and is marching straight upon the Danes. One day's march to Iglea (Iley or Highley?) the next—

> 'E lendemain à hure de none,
> Donc sunt venuz à Edenesdone' (Æthandune),[1]

as sang a Norman poet some three centuries afterwards.[2]

The Danish army came out to meet them. The serried ranks of the English were arranged in a wedge shape—that formation which of old days the Macedonian phalanx had loved, that *fylking hömal*, if so we may call it, which the Goths and the ancestors of the Vikings had often used. We can guess, as the English army came over the high down and looked over the rich plain towards Chippenham, what memories of burning homesteads, and violated wives, of sons

[1] Eddington or Heddington. Earle (*Sax. Chron.*, note s.a.) decides for Highley Common and Heddington.

[2] Gaimar, v. 3189-90.

and daughters enslaved and carried over sea,[1] nerved their arms for the coming battle.

It did not last long. Soon the Danes were flying for shelter to their camp at Chippenham, and once more Wessex was recovered to the English king.

Ælfred sat down to besiege the Danes in their camp. But anon, negotiations were opened which, as it proved, paved the way to a durable peace. However great may have been the desire of the English for vengeance, a little thought must have shown them that they had no chance of driving the Danes altogether out of the country. Even if they destroyed one army a fresh one would come next year to take its place, and the *esprit de corps* which existed among the Vikings—at any rate, those in England—would have made the new army the avenger of the old. Instead of this perpetual *vendetta*, an occasion offered for concluding something like a permanent peace between the English and the Danes. Each had tried the metal of the other; each seemed alike unconquerable. A few days since Ælfred had been all-but hunted out of the last corner of his realm; now by the peace which was presently concluded between him and Guthorm, not only was all Wessex restored to him, but even a considerable part of the Mercian kingdom, which seemed to have passed for ever into the hands of the Vikings. The peace was concluded at Wedmore, and by that name it is known in our history books. But there is no other name for it than that which we find in the collections of Anglo-Saxon laws and institutions, *Ælfreds and Gothorms Friö*, Ælfred and Guthorm's Peace. In every way its provisions were honourable to the English. By it Gothorm himself consented to receive baptism and to rule as a Christian king in East Anglia where the blood of Eadmund had cemented the devotion of the East Anglians to their creed. The baptismal name of Guthorm was Æthelstan. Ælfred acted as his sponsor. In the division of territory between the two kings, the Dane took the land east of a line which ran along the northern bank

[1] Cf. *Chron.* a.a.

of the Thames, turning away up the Lea before it reached London, then up to the source of the latter river, then straight up to Bedford, then up the Ouse till you reach Watling Street, and by that line up to Chester.[1] But here the kingdom of Guthorm came in contact with that which Halfdan had already established in Northumbria.

There were thus three kingdoms in England after Wedmore —two Danish and one English. Yet when we review the position of Ælfred just before the battle of Æthandune or the history of England for the twelve years which had followed the advent of the Great Army, the wonder is that Ælfred should have gained so much, not so little, as the result of a single battle.

For the position of the English was very different from that of their neighbours abroad. There, while a certain traditional reverence surrounded the Frankish and Imperial names, and the Empire by its very vastness and variety precluded the idea of complete conquest, here, in our compact island and on an homogeneous population, the scheme of conquest had been fairly tried. That it had not proved altogether successful was due to the obstinacy of the West Saxons, and more than all to the indomitable spirit of their king. But when once the best efforts had been put forth on either side, both parties to the combat recognized the merits of a compromise. Dane and English were everywhere admitted to an equal footing—the weregeld of a Dane was the same as that of an Englishman. The land was partitioned between them. If there were two Danish kingdoms and one English, we must remember that one of the Danes had become a Christian. Halfdan remained a heathen, and his memory was execrated accordingly. But his successor, a certain obscure Guðred, was most certainly a Christian. So that though the English people had suffered grievously and saw everywhere their lands divided with Danish

[1] Ærest ymbe heora land gemærca andlang Temese þæt [þanon] up in Ligean and lang Ligean oð hire æ-wylm (source) þanon on gerihta (straight on) to Bedanforda þanon up on Usan oð Wætlinga stræt. — *Ælfreds and Guthorms Frið*, not a contemporary source; but we have none better.

colonizers, they had not suffered without compensations; they were not a conquered nation, mere dirt beneath the feet of the victorious Vikings, as, wherever the Danes did plant themselves on the Continent, became the conquered Gauls or Frisians. Nor, again, was the realm of Christendom diminished save for a time; for the newly-settled Danes soon gave up their Odin worship. Before long the two people, so much alike in parentage and character, began to amalgamate, and out of that admixture came the race which it would be no extravagance to claim as the very cream of the English people—I mean the people of the north of England, of Yorkshire, and of Lincolnshire.

On this scene of the peace of Wedmore we may let the curtain fall; as it is a proper climax of the drama of Viking conquest in England. There were, of course, recurring waves of invasion, but they were no more than the final efforts of a storm that was spent. We can leave them aside. For the history of the Vikings on the Continent, the history of the Western Empire generally—silent for the last ten years—calls once more for our attention. To that ground the brunt of the struggle between the Northmen and the Christians was again transferred.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAUSE IN THE VIKING RAIDS.

I.

In Continental Europe, during the same period, no heroic struggle for life and death was going on between Christian and heathen; but a slow decay of all the forces of the Commonwealth which had been continually urged forward by the harassing attacks of the Northmen displayed its effects on every side.

Nevertheless we may allow that the means which Charles the Bald had adopted, if not for meeting the enemy in the open field, at any rate for troubling as far as possible his advance, had achieved a measure of success. When we were last concerned with the affairs of France, Robert and Ramnulf, the two doughtiest of her defenders, had just fallen. It might have been expected that the northern troubles would have greatly increased after the Franks had sustained such a loss. They did not do so: on the contrary they showed, as we saw, a sensible diminution. The stubborn resistance of Charles the Bald must have counted for something in this result.

Now, therefore, was an opportunity for the rulers of Europe to learn the lesson which the terrible disasters of the last twenty years had preached to them. Now was the time for them to put aside mutual rivalries, and by a wise alliance and

useful co-operation between all the members of the Carling House, to raise once more the drooping spirit of the Franks. Now, too, was the time for the Pope to call to arms all Western Christendom, to proclaim a first crusade against the two great enemies of the Christian name—the heathens from the north and the Saracens from the south.

How far were these measures adopted? What was actually the state of affairs in Europe during this dodecade of the great English invasion, from 866 to 878? To answer this question let us look at the three northern kingdoms in Continental Europe, beginning with the eastern and travelling westward.

So far as concerns Lewis the German it must be said that he had abandoned the thought of conquest towards the west, in the territory of either his nephew, Lothair II., or of his brother, Charles the Bald. His policy was directed where it ought always to have turned, to his eastern neighbours; to keeping in subjection, or at any rate at peace, the Slavs upon his borders —Sorabians, Bohemians, Moravians.

Of these three peoples the last were now the chief troublers of the peace in the German kingdom. Long ago, in the days of the civil war, Moimir, the tributary Duke of Mähren, had taken advantage of that period of disturbance to erect his duchy into a practically independent state. But Lewis, when he was secure of his own, again attacked the Moravian, deposed him, and placed his nephew Rastic, or Rastislas, in the duchy in his stead. This act was almost the last act of authority exercised by Lewis in Moravia. Even that had been closely followed by a crushing overthrow of Lewis's army at the hands of the Czechs of Bohemia, who were in league with their neighbours and fellow-Slavs, the Moravians. This event we have already recorded. It happened in 846, three years only after the treaty of Verdun. With such a lesson before him at his accession it is no matter for wonder that Rastic trod pretty closely in the steps of his uncle; that by A.D. 855 he had raised Moravia into the position of a practically independent state. In that year Lewis

A.D. 855.

the German set on foot a great expedition for the reduction of Moravia. But it, like nearly all the expeditions undertaken with this object, while seeming to accomplish something, effected, in the end, little or nothing. As the Frankish army advanced into the enemy's territory, Rastislas retreated, and he finally shut himself up in one of those marsh-girt fastnesses in which his country abounded. When at last Lewis's troops were obliged to retire, they were continually harassed by the Maravi, who eventually followed them across the Danube and plundered some of the German towns upon the right bank of the river. In A.D. 864, Lewis made another effort; and on this occasion he allied himself with the Khan of the Bulgars. This expedition was somewhat more successful. Rastislas could not be brought to an engagement; but he sent in hostages, and consented to tender some sort of homage to the German king. But in our present year, 866, the relations between the Slavs and Teutons were again disturbed; nor, between this year and that of the capture and death of Rastislas four years later, were the borders of the Ostmark ever secure against attack from the side of Moravia. Thus German policy had now an eastern outlook, as well as a western, as it has to this day. And the gravity of the position was immensely increased, when to the fear of Slavonic inroad was added the far greater terror of the invading Magyars. Magyar horsemen first appeared upon the south-east borders of Lewis's kingdom in A.D. 862. It was not, however, till after the end of our period that they began to be a real terror to Germany. It was on account of this eastern policy of Germany that the Ostmark, the Eastern Mark, which was the germ of the Austrian Archduchy, grew more and more in importance among the German territories.

A.D. 864.

A.D. 866.

This Ostmark, now that Lewis was getting on in years—he was sixty-four—and had grown-up sons with whom to share the cares of government, was put especially under the charge of the eldest of these sons, Carloman, his father's and mother's favourite, and from what we can learn, a handsome, strong, brave, and active prince; until a sad mishap befell him when

he had scarcely passed middle life. But to show any favour to one son was to excite the jealousy of the others. Lewis the German's sons were truly his children in this, and as ready as he had been on any provocation to set in defiance the authority of their father. The second more especially, the *æquivocus*, the Lewis whom our historians call Lewis the Saxon, was constantly in a state of covert rebellion against his father and against the interests of his elder brother Carloman. In these restless schemings of his, Lewis generally contrived to obtain the assistance and countenance of the youngest of the three brothers, the youngest and weakest, a timid, diseased, rashly rebellious or superstitiously scrupulous Charles, whom history knows well as that strange sport of Fortune, Charles the Fat.[1] The second preoccupation of the aging German king was now, therefore, to keep, as far as he might, a hand over his children and prevent them flying at each other's throats.

Of the Carling princes just now upon the throne, the most unfit to rule was he who governed the central kingdom—Lothair II. It was from him that the central kingdom got its name of Lotharingia, Lorraine. His public life during his reign of fourteen years is almost a blank, at any rate after his early appearance in co-operation with Charles against the Danes in Oissel. Lothair's domestic life became a public scandal, and his acts in connection with it rose to the importance of public acts for the effect which they had upon the future of Church and State. His whole energies were devoted to obtaining a divorce from his wife Thietberga, in order to marry a certain Waldrada, his former mistress, the mother of a beloved son, Hugo; according to his declaration (by which, therefore, he

[1] There can be little doubt that Charles was always more or less diseased, physically and mentally. He had that curious mental attack during the lifetime of his father (873). (*Ann. Fuld.*, *An. Xanten.* s.a., *Vita S.*, *Rimbert. c.* 20, &c.). Then he suffered fearfully from headaches during his short, inglorious reign, and at the end fell into a state of complete mental aberration. The name, Charles the Fat, was not bestowed upon him by his contemporaries. But he was corpulent—a state of body suggestive of, or at any rate consistent with, a weakness of brain.

accused himself of bigamy) she was his lawful wife before his marriage to Thietberga.[1]

The interest with which these divorce proceedings were followed by all Europe, the degree in which all the higher ecclesiastics were mixed up in them upon one side or the other, and in which the Pope himself made it his care to frustrate the desires of Lothair, form one of those incidents in mediæval history which seem to remove it far away from the feeling or the policy of our times. But the whole subject belongs more properly to the ecclesiastical than to the civil history of this century; and what little needs to be said about it will be said in another place.

Its importance for the public life of the day lay chiefly in the degree in which it withdrew the attention, not of Lothair alone, but of many of the greatest politicians of Europe from the far more pressing question of national defence against the northern invaders. In this direction Lothair himself did almost nothing. Even the great Hincmar, the ruling spirit in the counsels of Charles the Bald, forgot much which he should have remembered while engaged in the controversies which sprang out of the Lotharian divorce.

Thus in the western kingdom men were seduced from the wise path of statesmanship. Lothair's errors seemed to be Charles's and Hincmar's opportunity. They stood forth as the champions of Christian morality and of the authority of the Church and of the Pope. And though the Pope (Nicholas I.) and Hincmar subsequently quarrelled, Charles ever after remained on friendly terms with the Lateran, and enjoyed the prestige resulting from this alliance—a prestige, be it said, which French kings and emperors have ever since sought to retain, and which is expressed in the title of the old French monarchy, 'the Eldest Son of the Church.' This alliance stood Charles the Bald in good stead in the prosecution of some of his more ambitious schemes; but it was an evil thing

[1] The history of this important process is recorded in the *Annales Bertiani* (Prudentius and Hincmar) and in *Hincmari opera*. Cf. also Mansi, vol. xv. or Migne, t. 119, and Jaffé, *Regest. Pont.* I. 346 (2072), &c.

for France, which in these days required from its ruler not far-reaching ambition but energy and capacity at home. Farther off than ever was the chance of a union among all the princes in Northern Christendom, and therefore of a last strenuous effort against the Vikings, comparable to the effort which Ælfred was making on behalf of the English. Had the years been spent in preparations for that, the effects of the Oissel disaster might have been reversed.

Charles the Bald had now fewer difficulties than formerly with the rebellious states within his own borders. This result was chiefly due to the fact that he had given way on the chief points in dispute. The outcome of the long struggle with Brittany was the concession of practical independence to their principality. Erispoï, the son and successor of the first rebel Nominoï, in consideration of the virtual independence, which he had won by his victory near Rennes,[1] consented to acknowledge some sort of suzerainty on the part of the French king; and thus a *modus vivendi* was found between them (A.D. 851).[2] It was decided that this reconciliation **A.D. 851.** should be cemented by the marriage of Prince Lewis, the eldest son of Charles the Bald, and the ducal princess of Brittany (A.D. 856).[3] That marriage never took **A.D. 856–7.** place. A year after this peace had been brought about, Erispoï was murdered at the instigation of his kinsman, Salomon, who succeeded him upon the throne; and, if we are to believe Prudentius of Troyes, the intrigue which brought about the murder had not gone on without some countenance from Charles.[4] Salomon consented to pay the tribute which had been stipulated in the case of his predecessor, until the year 868—the year which we **A.D. 868.** have taken as our standpoint for the beginning of a review of the state of Europe. At this date Charles, finding himself weaker than ever after all the past years of Viking ravage, and Salomon growing restless even in his nominal dependence, the French king went the length of presenting the

[1] See above, p. 278. [2] *Ann. Bert.* s.a. [3] *Ann. Bert.* s.a.
[4] *Ann. Bert.* and Wenck, *Gesch. des F. R.* 314.

Breton duke with a golden and jewelled crown, and thereby recognizing the complete independence of Brittany. So that Salomon stepped from the rank of a duke to that of a king.[1]

Of Septimania, or Gothia, we hear little at this time. When we hear of it again we find a Count Bernard ruling there once more. This Bernard was not descended from that older Bernard whom men had once called the father of Charles the Bald, and whom Charles afterwards caused to be beheaded;[2] and he was for the present a faithful vassal of the King of West Francia. But if Charles had less trouble from his vassals then formerly, he had more within his own household. The ingrained vice of the Carlovingian or of the Frankish blood began now to show itself among the children of Charles the Bald as it had already shown itself among the children of Lewis the German. Only in the case of the West Frank princes there were not so many quarrels and jealousies among themselves as a pretty general unanimity in thwarting the wishes of their father, and, when occasion offered, in supporting their own designs by arms. Charles the Bald seems to have been especially arbitrary in arranging the marriages of his children, and almost all *their* recalcitrations sprang originally from their resentment of his interference with their own choice in this matter. In truth, it is curious the part which love affairs play in the politics of Europe at this moment. Here on one side was Lothair II. ready to stake all for his infatuation for his mistress Waldrada. In England Æthelwulf had endangered his crown by his union with a young French princess; and presently Æthelwulf's son, Æthelbald, made the world the witness of an awful scandal by his marriage, upon the death of Æthelwulf, with his stepmother, this same princess Judith.[3] The grudge of Lewis, the son of Charles the Bald, against his father, was due to a love affair. His affections were

[1] *Ann. Bert.* s.a.

[2] Another Bernard, who apparently was grandson of the older Marquis of Gothia, is mentioned about this time as doing homage to Charles.

[3] See above, pp. 329–30.

set upon a certain Ansgard, 'daughter of Count Hardwin.'[1] Charles always opposed the marriage, and eventually obliged Lewis to dissolve it. At one time he ordered his son to marry the daughter of the Breton prince Erispoï. This marriage was frustrated, as we saw, by the murder of the Breton duke. The young Lewis the Stammerer's private troubles in this kind made him sympathize with his sister Judith in her love affairs, which were of a sufficiently scandalous sort. Judith, after the death of Æthelbald, returned to Francia and cast her eyes upon Baldwin, the handsome forester; she allowed him to carry her off—as by force. As a go-between in the business, acted her brother Lewis.[2] Charles was highly incensed with both children, and though one would have thought there was no other course to be adopted, he long opposed the legalization of Judith and Baldwin's connection by marriage. The Pope himself had to intervene. At last the marriage was celebrated, but Charles would not be present at it.

Later on we shall see Charles, in his turn, past his middle age, submitting to the common destiny, and on the death of his first wife falling into the hands of an intriguing woman, with intriguing relations, whereby, among other things, Hincmar was ousted from the position of confidence he had enjoyed about the king, and a complete change of policy ensued in the West Frank kingdom.

To the two rebellious children of Charles the Bald already mentioned—Lewis and Judith—we must add Charles, king of Aquitaine. He, too, when only fifteen, made a marriage against his father's wishes.[3] The troubles which these sons raised up had been felt in days when the Vikings were still a pressing danger to the Frankish kingdom: no patriotic scruples had restrained them. The most serious among the risings of Lewis occurred in 862. He took the command of a

[1] *Ann. Bert.* (Pertz, i. 457), Regino, s.a. 878 (P. i. 590). Ansgard was the mother of Lewis's two sons and successors, Lewis and Carlmann. See next chapter.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* s.a. 862. Hincmar says that Judith followed Baldwin in male attire.

[3] *Ann. B.* (P. i. 457).

body of Bretons, and marched into Robert the Strong's territory of Anjou. But Robert stood firm for the father against the son. Lewis was defeated, and compelled to submit. A kind of reconciliation between the father and his children followed, resulting in the sanction of Judith's marriage, though, as we have said, grudgingly. But Lewis, who had taken the occasion to marry Ansgard, was forced to put her away again.

Thus we see there was no union among the princes of the Frankish Empire for the common good; no building of fleets in fulfilment of Charlemagne's desires long ago, or after the pattern of what Ælfred was even now effecting in England. No papal bull was issued calling Christians to take up arms against the common enemy; no Peter the Hermit or Bernard preached a first crusade; no Godfrey arose to be the champion of Europe. Yet the Viking invasions—we may begin to call them *invasions* now—were far more threatening than any desecration of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem three centuries later; even the Saracens in Italy and Sicily were a greater danger to Christendom than in the twelfth century was the power of Saláh-ed-Dín.

In Italy, indeed, the conduct of men and princes was more worthy—if we could concern ourselves with Italy. There Lewis the emperor was engaged in a heroic struggle against the Saracens, which might well have put to shame his brother and his uncles beyond the Alps. As the Vikings in the north from many rebellious vassals, so, shameful to tell, the Saracens found support among the last representatives of the old Lombard dukedoms in the centre and south of the peninsula—the Dukes of Beneventum and Salerno. In 867 Lewis began the siege of Bari, the great stronghold of the Saracens ever since their first invasion in 841. At length, and after much delay, by the help of a Greek fleet he completed the blockade of the town. The infidels, reduced by want, could no longer defend their walls; at the beginning of 871 the place was stormed, and the greater part of the garrison was put to the sword. Almost at the same time a Frankish and Lombard army under the command of the Mar-

A.D. 871.

quis of Friuli, gained a signal victory over a force of twenty thousand Saracen troops who were marauding in the Duchy of Beneventum.[1]

In the midst of this victorious career a misfortune befel Lewis, comparable in almost every respect to that which befel our Richard I. on the return from *his* successful crusading in the Holy Land. Adalgis, Duke of Beneventum, had hitherto fought side by side with the emperor, much as Leopold of Austria had fought side by side with Richard in Palestine. But it was noted how at the taking of Bari he had used his influence to shield the sultan of Bari, when the rest of the garrison were slain. It was said that the sultan had earned his gratitude by sparing the honour of Adalgis's daughter, who was a prisoner in the city, and restoring her to her father uninjured. Adalgis now carried the sultan with him as, so to say, a prisoner on parole. The Mussulman succeeded in inflaming his jealousy and his fears of Lewis. Adalgis was told that so soon as the Moslem war was over, the emperor intended to depose him and incorporate Beneventum and Salerno into the Italian kingdom. To forestall such designs the duke made up his mind to seize the person of Lewis while still in his territory; and having done this he kept Lewis a prisoner in Beneventum. The Pope, all Italy, rose in fury. Adalgis had to release his prey, after exacting such oaths of non-retaliation as he thought necessary—oaths from which Lewis was immediately released by the Pope. But Lewis's far-reaching designs for driving the Saracens out of Italy were all shattered. The southern duke was in league with the infidel; Lewis had to retire to the north and concoct his measures of revenge upon the Duke of Beneventum.[2]

While Lewis was engaged in his Saracen war in the south of Italy he was visited by his brother Lothair, who came to seek his influence in furthering his famous divorce case. Nicholas I., Lothair's untiring adversary, had

A.D. 869.

[1] *Hist. Lomb. Beneventi post P.D.* (Erchempert) ap. Muratori, ii. 245, *sqq.*; *cf.* Dümmler *Ostf. Gesch.* i. 704–5.

[2] Muratori, *l.c.*; Reginonis, *Chron.* (Pertz, 583–5); Dümmler, *l.c.* 711 *sqq.*

died in A.D. 867, and a new pope had come to the chair of St. Peter. The circumstances of the meeting between Lothair and Hadrian II. we will leave to another chapter, and with them the history of Lothair's false oath at Monte Cassino and of his death a few months afterwards at Piacenza, on his way home to his own country.[1]

II.

The death of the King of Lotharingia was a great event, affecting the whole politics of Europe. Each of the remaining Carling princes prepared to assert his claim to the inheritance of the dead king. Carl, the youngest son of Lothair I., the poor, *chétif*, epileptic King of Provence, had died some six years previously, and his kingdom had been divided between his two brothers, Lewis getting Provence and Lothair Trans-jurane Burgundy. So that the emperor had already a foothold upon this side of the Alps. There could be no question that of right the whole inheritance of his brother should have fallen to him, now the only surviving son of the first Lothair. He had a right to all the territory which had been assigned to his father by the treaty of Verdun.

None had deserved better of the Christian commonwealth than Lewis, who had been far more successful in his wars against the Saracens than his uncles had been against Moravians, or Bretons, or Vikings. No wonder, therefore, that the Pope warmly espoused his cause. But Lewis had in truth done his duty by his own kingdom too well. He had identified himself with Italy and Italian affairs. He was a stranger to the peoples north of the Alps. And it is certain that by the late subjects of Lothair themselves he, of all the claimants, would have been the least welcome. Lewis was moreover at the moment too much engaged over his siege of Bari (which did not yield for two years yet) to be able to support his just claims by arms.

Charles the Bald, on the other hand, had been so fully prepared, that almost directly he heard the news of Lothair's

[1] See Chapter XVI.

death he was able to enter Lotharingia with an army.[1] The energy which was never capable of making a decisive resistance to the northern invaders was at the service of Charles's personal ambition whenever an increase of territory seemed likely to be the reward of promptitude. Hincmar supported his sovereign energetically in these measures. His care had been, during the lifetime of Lothair, to support the cause of justice and Thietberga against the iniquitous decisions (such they were pronounced) of the Councils of the Church of Lorraine. He might, no doubt, have found better outlet for his energies at home, and if with the eye of prophecy he could have seen the Viking army gathering round his beloved Rheims, he might have thought there were better things to do than to promote Charles's adventures to the east, and increase through these conquests the jurisdiction of his own archiepiscopate. A humbler sort of work was needed there. Where were the stones which had formed the ancient walls of St. Remigius' city? The late archbishop, Ebbo, had removed a large number in order to build therewith a new cathedral, and the walls had not been built up again—a bad omen in such days as these.

Charles's claims to Lotharingia were not likely to remain undisputed. If the Emperor Lewis was powerless for the time, not so was Lewis the German. He was hindered, indeed, by a general rising of the Slavs upon his eastern borders, in bringing about which it is likely enough Charles had a hand.[2] But when he was able to put his army in motion westwards, Lewis did so with effect.[3] Charles did not venture to maintain his position at the point of the sword; and a division of Lotharingia was peaceably arranged between the two brothers at Meersen (870).

By this treaty, setting at nought the claims of the emperor, all Christian Europe north of the Alps and east of the Channel, save the little territory of Provence A.D. 870.

[1] *Ann. Bert.* a. 869 (Pertz, i. 482–4). Hincmar puts his own gloss on these transactions. [2] *Ann. Fuld.* (Pertz, i. 381–2).

[3] Lewis had moreover been lamed by the falling of a building. With great stoicism he managed to conceal the injuries he had received, lest Charles should be encouraged thereby (*Ann. Fuld.* s.a. 870).

(Provence *east* of the Rhone), was divided into two kingdoms, an eastern and a western. Roughly speaking, the boundaries of Charles's kingdom may now be taken to be the Rhone, the Saone, a fragment of the Moselle from near Toul to just south of Trèves, then across to the Meuse at Liège and along the course of that stream to the sea. Roughly, that is the dividing line. But it swerves somewhat to the east of the Saone and to the west of the Moselle. The kingdom of Lewis began to the east of this line and to the north of the Rhone, and of what is still the dividing line between Italy and Switzerland.[1]

The emperor had to content himself with the thought of his Italian victories.[2] That siege of Bari, of which we have spoken, was brought to an end in 871, the year following the partition of Meersen, with great slaughter of Saracens, and the capture of Emir Suliman, as we have seen. Then followed Lewis's brief Cœur-de-Lion captivity. When released therefrom, Lewis found himself confronted by two sets of foes—Adalgis, with his Christian allies, and the old enemy the Saracen. Over these last he did, however, gain one more important victory in 872, in which nine thousand or, according to some, twelve thousand of the infidels were slain.

But alas for Christendom! In 875 a comet has been flaming in the sky all through the month of June, and before the grapes are gathered a melancholy procession is wending along the road from Brescia to Milan. At the head of it ride the Archbishop of Milan, the Bishops of Brescia, of Bergamo, of Cremona. With mournful hymns and raised crosses they are bringing to its last resting-place in Milan the mortal remains of the dead Cæsar, Lewis II.; too early dead.[3] A brave and pious man, though the fortune of his earlier years had brought about one sharp collision between him and Pope Nicholas I., ending in a sacrilegious attack by

A.D. 875.

[1] *Ann. Bert.* (Pertz, i. 487–8).

[2] Lewis the German did, in fact, meet the Empress Engelberga at Trent in 871, and agree to resign his share of Lotharingia to his nephew (*cf.* Pertz, *Leges*, i. 518). But he revoked this concession the following year (*Ann. Bert.* s.a.).

[3] Andreas Berg. (Muratori, ii.); Erchempert (*ibid.*).

his troops upon Rome and the mishandling of priests and monks in the very train of the holy father. Lewis had reigned as a really independent king of Italy from long before the death of his father in 855; and, save for the inheritance of half of his brother Charles's Provençal kingdom, which came to him in 863, he had never been, in fact, much more than King of Italy, though he bore the imperial name. Even as King of Italy he had little power over the Duchy of Beneventum, the Duchy of Spoleto, and other remnants of Greek and Lombard rule. But if he had lived a few years longer he would probably have united these to his crown, have driven the Saracens out of the peninsula, and have ruled over a unified Italy. His death, therefore, was a heavy mischance for that country: never again, through all the Middle Ages, through all succeeding centuries until our own day, was she to know what it was to be a united Italy.

Strange that the family of Lothair should have died out in this manner, while his two brothers still remained upon their thrones! Here was a new field of ambition open to the two kings beyond the Alps, and two parties were formed in Italy—first note of a deep division in her politics—to support respectively the French and the German interests. We think of Henry of Luxemburg and Robert of Naples, of the Avignon Popes, or of Charles of Anjou and the heirs of Frederick the Great, when we see ranged upon the French side the pope of these days, not Hadrian now, but his successor, John VIII., and on the other Engelberga, widow of the late emperor, and what we may call the imperial party. Of the two kings themselves, Germany and France, in whose interests these parties were formed, Lewis was now old and worn with the fatigue of a long reign, obliged, during the last year or two of his life (he only survived his nephew one year), to leave the government in the hands of his sons: not even of any one son, for their mutual jealousies were great. Otherwise, Charles the Bald had hardly dared to raise his ambitious hopes so high as to the imperial diadem.

III.

The view of the new actors who are stepping upon the scene, and of the greater and greater difficulty in distinguishing among the princes of the Carling House whom we have met with and shall meet, let us pause a moment at the death of the emperor, while as yet England is in mortal wrestle with her northern invaders, while, except for slight and intermittent attacks, the Continent has been left at peace, and try to get into our heads all the different scions of the Carling House, all the different Charleses and Lewises and the rest who have played and are to play their parts in this history.

Let us go back to the sons of Lewis the Pious. These, at least, we can remember: Lothair, Pippin, Lewis, by the first marriage with Irmingard; Charles by the second marriage with Judith.

Lothair's sons were three, as likewise we remember without difficulty.

LEWIS II., called so because he was the second emperor of that name, his grandfather, Lewis the Pious, being the first. He married Engelberga, the proud empress, daughter, it is believed, of the Duke of Spoleto. By her he had no sons who attained maturity; but he had a daughter, Engeltrud, who played her part in history.

LOTHAIR II., second as king of his father's transalpine kingdom, or the greater part of it, which from him took the name of Lotharingia. His rule did, in fact, extend from the North Sea, including the modern united Netherlands and Belgium north of the Scheld, southwards, roughly speaking, between the Scheld and the Meuse in the west and the Rhine in the east, ending with a line drawn between Basle on one side and the junction of the Saone and the Doubs on the other. This is the older and larger Lotharingia, a name which in later days got a narrower significance. Afterwards, when Charles, the King of Provence, died, and his inheritance was divided between his two surviving brothers, Lothair got Burgundy and Lewis Provence, the larger Provence which extended northward to include the country between the Rhone

and the Durance. How Lothair was married to Thietberga and loved Waldrada, and all his efforts to break his marriage tie, we have seen or seen sufficiently. He had no children by his wife; but by Waldrada he had three natural children, two of whom are connected with our narrative—Hugo, afterwards known as Hugo of Lorraine, and Gisla or Gisella, Hugo's sister, married (as we shall see) to Godfred the Dane. There was a third daughter, Bertha, whom we may forget if we choose.

CHARLES was the third son, a weakly, epileptic prince, with good dispositions and intentions. Once only has Viking history anything to say to him—on that occasion, namely, when Björn, Hasting, and their fleet took winter quarters upon the island of Camargue, at the Rhone mouth, and sailed up the river as far as Arles and Valence, which last place they plundered and burnt. On one occasion this Charles's uncle, Charles the Bald, at the invitation of some malcontents of the realm, and profiting by the weakness of his nephew, made an unprovoked invasion of Provence, in the hope of adding some portion of it to his own territories. But he had to beat a humiliating retreat. When this Charles of Provence died, his brothers divided his territory in the way that has been described, and unopposed by Lewis the German or Charles the Bald.

We come next to the sons of Pippin, who have already played their part in the historical drama, and therefore may be soon dismissed.

PIPPIN was the elder, the pretender of Aquitaine, or at any rate the pretender to South Aquitaine, the Gascon countries: he who fought by the side of the Emperor Lothair at Fontenoy, who upheld his cause for long, and by every means which fell to his hands; so that the end of him was that he was found in open alliance with the Vikings, having, it was said, forsworn his faith and adopted even the manners and mode of dress of the Northmen. In the summer of A.D. 864 he was taken prisoner by Count Ramnulf, was tried by his peers, and condemned to

death, but spared at the instance of Hincmar, and imprisoned for life. Thus he disappears from off the stage.

CHARLES was the next brother—he is, we see, already the third Charles on our list, and by no means the last. Threatening also to rebel against his uncle, he was compelled by Charles the Bald to take orders, and obtained from Lewis the German the Archbishopric of Mainz, in which see he preceded Raban.

The next of the sons of Lewis the Pious is Lewis the German, whose career, whenever it has touched the subject of this history, we have followed with sufficient closeness. He was now, in 875, seventy-one years of age, and near the end of his life and reign. He had ruled as King of Bavaria ever since the great *Divisio Imperii* of A.D. 817, that is, since his fourteenth year; and as king of nearly all Germany since the Treaty of Verdun in A.D. 843. The additional portion of his kingdom, acquired since the death of Lothair, he had governed six years. Lewis had three sons—Carloman, Lewis, and Charles.

CARLOMAN, the favourite of his father—against whom, notwithstanding, he was once in rebellion—and still more of his mother Emma, was at this moment a handsome, valiant, and capable prince, ruling in practical independence Bavaria, the Ostmark, and Carinthia, keeping a watch over the rebellious neighbouring Slavs, more especially against the Moravians and their Duke, Suatopluk or Zwentibold. Zwentibold had succeeded to his uncle Rastics, against whom he had at one time sought the assistance of the Franks; but now he was treading as closely as possible in the footsteps of his predecessor. Too complicated is the history of Mähren and its dukes, and too remote from the history of the Vikings, to occupy us here. Carloman was sometimes at war with Rastics; once, at any rate, in alliance with him against Carloman's own father the German king. But he remained his father's favourite till the death of Lewis the German. He had no legitimate offspring; but, like his cousin Lothair, one illegitimate son, Arnolf by name, who occupies a conspicuous place in the later history of

this century. Gisla, or Gisella, the sister of Arnolf, married the Zwentibold of whom we have spoken. The jealousy of Carloman's brothers, especially of Lewis, much crippled the capacities of this prince; and a sad mischance (of which we shall have to speak in its place) cut short his reign.

LEWIS (our *third* Lewis, alas !) was the second of the sons of Lewis the German. Him the history books—for no clearly assignable reason—designate as Lewis the Saxon. Better to call him Lewis the Younger, as some writers do. He, too, proved himself on more than one occasion a valiant and skilful general and ruler; but he was likewise a turbulent and unruly subject during the lifetime of his father, stirring up, to aid and abet him, his youngest brother Charles, who had moments of bitter repentance for his undutiful conduct. In the latter portion of his reign, moreover, owing probably to ill-health, Lewis seemed to lose all vigour of character, and to belie the promise of his earlier years. During the lifetime of his father, he ruled chiefly in the Franconian territory. To this, after Lewis the German's death, were added Saxony and Thuringia. Finally, he succeeded before the death of Carloman in ousting his brother from Bavaria, and in practically dethroning him. Lewis had no special connection with Saxony beyond the fact that he married a wife out of a very famous Saxon house—that of which we have spoken, whence was to proceed the line called that of the 'Saxon Emperors' in Germany. This queen was the daughter of Liudolf, niece, therefore, of Cobbo, and sister of Otto and Bruno, famous in themselves, but much more famous in their offspring.

CHARLES (our *fourth* Charles) was the third son of Lewis the German. His original kingdom was Swabia, and he is sometimes called Charles of Swabia. History, however, knows him by a more familiar title. On the occasion of a descent into Italy (whereof we must speak presently) to oppose his uncle Charles the Bald, the Italians, to distinguish between the two Carlos, gave to the nephew the name of Carolito, or 'Little Charles.' A later age, however, changed this name to one of an exactly opposite significance, 'Charles the Fat,' and by that

name he is known to history. This Charles lived to inherit all the vast domains which had once obeyed the awful sceptre of Charlemagne. This was a distinction. But Carolito had likewise the distinction of being the most incapable or the most unlucky of all the descendants of the Great Emperor, the one whose inheritance was taken from him and given to strangers, not his children, not of the legitimate Carling blood. As the Roman Empire has its Augustus and its Augustulus, so has the Carling race its Charles the Great and Charles the Fat.

Finally, we come to the family of Charles the Bald. Of the father we need say nothing special, for his reign is intimately bound up with the history of this century, and he has been, and will be till his death, constantly before us. Like his father, he married twice, once in youth, and once past middle life. By the first wife, Irmintrud, whom he married in A.D. 842 (he was only eighteen), he had:—

LEWIS (our *fourth* Lewis), known to his contemporaries as Ludovicus Balbus, Lewis the Stammerer. Eloquence was not, perhaps, at such a premium in those days as in ours. But it had its weight. Many are the stories told of Charlemagne's readiness of speech, even in matters to which, to say the least, he must have been a little strange: as, for example, when in the presence of his assembled bishops and nobles, as also of two papal nuncios, he made an unpremeditated harangue refuting the heresy of the *Adoptians*—those who maintained that Christ was not the actual, but the *adopted* Son of God. Any marked physical defect, moreover, would have detracted from the prestige of even the wisest of men and kings in those days; and Lewis the Stammerer, though not without talents, was not the wisest of men and kings. In his father's lifetime he received the title of King of Neustria. Of the part he took in opposition to Charles the Bald, and in the furtherance of the marriage between his sister Judith and Baldwin the Forester, we have seen something. His short reign we have still to see.

CHARLES (our *fifth* Charles), the next son, was, during the

lifetime of his father, a more conspicuous personage than his elder brother. For to gratify the Aquitanians' aspirations for Home Rule, Charles the Bald raised this son to the rank of an almost independent king of Aquitaine. He commanded the Aquitanian army, and brought it as a contingent to the army commanded by his father before Oissel. He was not behind his brother Lewis, nor his cousins in Germany, in rebellious schemes. He came to an untimely end during the lifetime of his father. He was returning from a day's hunting with some friends of his own age and in a 'skylarking' mood, as we should say; when it was growing dark he suddenly rode up to one of them who, we may suppose, had got separated by some little distance from his comrades, and made as if to attack him. Alboin—this was the name of the young man—in the twilight mistook Prince Charles for a robber, and aimed a blow which took effect upon the head of the prince, inflicting a deep wound; and though Charles did not die immediately, he never recovered from the effects of the blow, and lingered for only two years. He had at this date (A.D. 875) been dead nine years.

A third son of Charles the Bald, LOTHAIR, was pointed out by nature for an ecclesiastic. A tame, gentle, and retiring prince, he was made Abbot of St. German l'Auxerrois, and died untouched by the stream of worldly politics.

CARLOMAN, another Carloman, was the fourth son of Charles the Bald. He was likewise dedicated to the Church, and became Abbot of St. Médard, an abbacy which Hildwin had held in former days. Carloman, however, did not fail in the family tradition. He rebelled against his father and sought at the same time to divest himself of his orders. He was more hardly treated than any of the other rebel sons. Taken prisoner, he was tried and condemned to lose his sight, as well as to a perpetual confinement. Eventually he escaped to Lewis the German, under whose protection he ended his sightless days.

But we must not leave out of the catalogue of the children of Charles the Bald Judith, whose ill-starred Melusina beauty

did so much to sow divisions both in her own country and in ours. Of her scandalous love affairs we have already spoken, and as she was by this time safely married to Count Baldwin of Flanders we need speak of her no more.

By his second wife, Richildis, sister of Count Boso, who is a conspicuous person during the years to come, Charles had several other children, but they none of them attained maturity.

IV.

Let us now return to the affairs of the empire at the point at which we left them—the death of Lewis II. One month after this event a council of grandees was held at Pavia under the presidency of Engelberga, the empress widow. But though Engelberga herself was wholly in favour of the succession of Lewis the German, the Council was divided. On his side, the Pope (John VIII.) had already sent a message to his beloved son Charles, inviting him to come and receive the imperial crown in Rome.[1] The French king had been collecting an army, and, almost at the same time that the Council was being held in Pavia, he crossed the Alps and presently descended upon that city, where he was welcomed by his partisans.[2]

Meantime the other Charles—Charles of Swabia, Carolito—had been commissioned to maintain the cause of his father Lewis.[3] He, too, crossed the Alps and entered Lombardy. But he had neither troops nor courage enough to venture upon an engagement; and at the approach of his uncle he retreated once more across the mountains. All opposition, however, was not over: for a much more formidable antagonist to Charles the Bald presently appeared in the person of Carloman, Lewis's eldest son, with a Bavarian army.[4] Breaking through the barriers which Charles the Bald had sought to place across the Alpine passes, he was presently within a day's march of the West Frank army. Thereupon his uncle, abandoning the use of

[1] *Ann. Bert.* 875 (P. i. 498; *cf.* P. iii. 722).
[2] *Ann. Fuld.* (P. i. 389). [3] *Ann. Bert. l.c.* [4] Ibid.

force, tried his hand at negotiation and craft. He engaged to retire upon the retirement of Carloman, and to submit his case to 'arbitration'; the arbitrator to be his own rival and brother, Lewis the German. No terms could have seemed to Carloman more favourable; but Charles had no intention of keeping to them. When Carloman had retired, he advanced. And now he took his way unopposed to Rome. By December he had reached the capital, and at Christmas—in imitation of the world-famous coronation of his grandfather seventy-five years before—he received the imperial diadem at the hands of John VIII.[1] By March he had returned to his hereditary kingdom of Francia.[2]

And now Charles took to prinking himself out in the costume of the Greek emperors in despite of the simpler dress of the Frankish kings. He clad himself in the long Greek *dalmatica*, a long tunic reaching to the feet, heavily embossed with gold and studded with jewels. We know it best from Byzantine or semi-Byzantine pictures or mosaics of Christ, who, even on the cross, is generally clad in this long robe. To the short Frankish cloak and hose it was contrasted much as the talaric chitôn of the Ionians was to the short Attic chitôn.

Lewis the German always adhered to the Frankish dress, which certainly was in its way sufficiently striking, a tunic or shirt and hose of fine linen dyed some brilliant colour—scarlet, maybe; to this, gilt shoes bound to the leg by gilt bands reaching half way up the calf—cross-gartered, in truth, like Malvolio's. Over these garments was worn an outer cloak of wool, fashioned to some extent like the Roman toga. This is the picture we must draw for ourselves of Lewis the German, and of Charles the Bald likewise, before he took to his fantastic Greek attire, and of the Viking leaders too, who imitated in almost every particular Frankish fashions—'Welsh (Frankish) reps and Welsh swords,' says a verse of the Edda. Scarlet was a very favourite colour with the Northmen, and has remained so

[1] *Ann. Bert.* a. 876; Regino, a. 875.

[2] Lewis the German revenged himself by organizing a raid into Francia (*Ann. Bert. l.c.*).

with them as with us; as witness the Danish national standard, the Danebrog, and our scarlet uniforms.

Could it be expected that amid these glancing new fortunes Charles the Bald would have much time to attend to such old humdrum matters as a wise economical government at home, or, above all, to the vigilant defence of his coasts against the enemy from the north? France had been miraculously free from attack of late years. It would seem as if Providence were determined to give her one more chance; or as if the gods had determined to madden her the more by over-confidence, seeing that, without reason or ascertainable cause (that she could understand), the threatening powers had drawn off just when the weakness of the empire was becoming more and more apparent. During this period we need to record but one important attack made by the Northmen. It was made in 873 in the Loire district. After plundering on all sides the Vikings took Angers. Charles collected troops to attack them there, and in order to make his attack a surprise, he gave it out that he was preparing an expedition against the Bretons and their king Salomon (Salomo), with whom he had in reality entered into alliance. Suddenly the Frankish army turned upon the camp of the Northmen; and it was joined by a contingent of Bretons under Wigon, the son of Salomon. But though the Vikings were at first hard pressed, not much was effected by this concerted attack. The siege of Angers dragged on from August to October. At last the Northmen came to terms, and agreed to abandon their stronghold and all the Frankish territory if a safe conduct were assured them back to the sea.[1]

And now further prospects seemed to open before Charles the Bald; for just one twelvemonth after the death of Lewis the Emperor, that is to say in August, 876, died the emperor's uncle and namesake, Lewis the German.[2] As we have seen, this Lewis had been King of Bavaria for nearly sixty years, and in almost all the rest of his dominions for more than thirty: a clear-eyed, brave, hard-working king.

A.D. 876.

[1] *Ann. Bert.*; Regino, s.a. (Pertz, i. 496, 585).

[2] In the palace of Frankfurt, August 28. Regino (P. i. 588).

Through all the long years of his reign Fate never allowed him to rest and be thankful. No doubt he reaped in part the evil seed he had sown. His rebellious sons were but following the example of their father, when they made his last years years of trouble and not of peace. With them, with Moravians, Sorabians, Czechs, Danes, malcontent Saxons, nobles mutually jealous, he had had to encounter with a sea of troubles during his long reign. He had affronted all; had issued from the long battle of life if not wholly victorious, at any rate not beaten.

The vast kingdom which the German king had governed with so firm a hand was at once parcelled among his sons. Carloman, the eldest, got Bavaria with the East Mark, and with Carinthia (no longer an Italian province). These he had long ruled in practical independence. Lewis got Saxony, Thuringia, Eastern Lorraine and the Danish Mark: his to keep the keenest watch against incursions of the sea-folk. Charles (Carolito) got Swabia and Elsass.

Charles the Bald, we remember, had, at the death of Lothair II., hoped and tried to add to his own kingdom the whole of Lotharingia. But when Lewis the German armed and prepared to dispute his title, he gave way; and the dispute resulted in the peaceful division of Meersen. Now, however, an opportunity seemed to offer for realizing that abandoned dream of ambition, now that his redoubtable brother was no more.[1]

Lewis the Younger was indeed no novice. He had received his baptism of fire seven-and-twenty years ago. But at his back were not the forces of the whole German land, only that of his own kingdom; for it was not to be supposed that his two brothers, with so much upon their hands, would uphold the cause of Lewis the Saxon by their arms. Charles the Bald, too, may have remembered the abortive invasion of his own territories by the same antagonist twenty-two years before. So that there was an old score to settle between the uncle and nephew.

Yet how many worthier calls there were upon the energies of Charles the Bald. The same autumn in which Lewis the

[1] Regino, *l.c.*

German died, a new Viking fleet, strong one hundred sail, came navigating up the Seine, the first that had sought those waters for ten years. The Northmen were now beginning to drift back from England,[1] where there was not much room for further conquest, and where, if there had been much to gain, there had been much to suffer likewise.

Not only did France call for the protection of the king, but Italy was in dire distress. The Saracens were filled with new hopes now that their arch-enemy, the late Cæsar, was dead; they were now spreading far beyond their ancient limits, storming across the Campagna to the very gates of Rome. Pope John wrote in piteous distress to 'his dearest son and most gracious emperor, by God Himself created to be our refuge, our comfort, and our help.' But the refuge, comfort, and help remained obstinately deaf. To be called Cæsar Augustus, to wear the Greek dalmatica and a costly jewelled diadem, this was one thing; the concomitant duty of defending his new territories and keeping the infidel in check, this was a part of Cæsardom for which Charles felt less inclination.

The attack on Lotharingia appeared to him an easier or more inviting adventure. I do not know how many times Charles and Lewis the German had entered into mutual guarantees of each other's territories for themselves and their heirs. It was a wanton violation of justice, this attack, such as Hincmar, who approved the first invasion of Lotharingia, would never have sanctioned had he kept the conscience of the king.

But Hincmar's reign was over. A young wife now possessed Charles's ear. He had married Richildis almost immediately after the mourning for his first wife, Irmintrud, who died in 869, was over, and in the intervening period after the death of Irmintrud, he had possessed her as his mistress. With the weakness of an old husband, he allowed all the credit at Court to Richildis's kin; more especially to her ambitious brother, Boso. Boso had been made, in 871, Count of Vienne, on the acquisition of the province by Charles the Bald,[2] and he

[1] *Cf. Ann. Fuld.* 876.

[2] It was wrested from Lewis in 870.

was already working hard to lay the foundation of a power in that territory which eventually earned him a crown.

The time was, upon the whole, favourable to Charles's new undertaking. True there was that fresh influx of Vikings into the Seine which demanded attention; but, on the other hand, Aquitaine was in a more peaceful condition than it had been for a generation. It was once again an integral part of the western kingdom. Even Brittany paid Charles tribute and remained within her borders; for the name of emperor still carried with it a moral force, was still awe-inspiring in a certain degree.

Lewis the Younger, on his side, when he heard of the approach of his uncle, was fully conscious of the dangers which encompassed him.[1] His army was hastily gathered together, and not half so large as that commanded by Charles the Bald. The latter, too, consisted chiefly of Franks, who still bore—for their *élan*, or whatever it might be—the highest military reputation of any among the nations of Christendom. Lewis, no doubt, had a good contingent of East Franks with his colours; the rest of his troops were chiefly Saxons. At first the German king tried what could be done by negotiation. He sent messengers to Charles the Bald, and these appealed, as diplomatists not unfrequently did in those days, to the conscience of their adversaries. They recalled to Charles the oaths to his dead brother, and reminded him that there yet lived a God, the avenger of the innocent, the punisher of the forsworn. But these words made no impression upon the West Frank king. In his reply he anticipated (oddly enough) the excuse which the Vikings were to make in after-years, to his West Frank subjects for an act of treachery similar to his own. His oaths, he said, had been given to the dead Lewis, not to any of his sons.

The demand which Charles made of his nephew was, we have said, the eastern part of Lotharingia, which had been the elder Lewis's share at the Treaty of Meersen. It was the very

[1] *Ann. Fuld.; Ann. Bert.; Ann. Xant.;* Regino, s.a. 876, for the account which follows.

same claim which France put forward under the Napoleons, and, maybe, will some day put forward again—the Rhine was to flow as the boundary between the eastern and western kingdoms. And as the German soldiers assembled under the banners of Lewis the Saxon when he made his camp at Deutz, they were no doubt singing, in the fashion of their day :—

Sie sollen ihn nicht haben,
Den freien deutschen Rhein.

From where they pitched their tents they could see the other side of the river, the 'hohe Dom' of Cologne, mirroring itself in the swift waters; but they dared not reach it, and under its shadow the enemy presently established their head-quarters. Thus Charles already occupied the disputed territory.

How to drive him out again? At Deutz Lewis received his returned ambassadors and saw that there was no alternative for him but battle or surrender. He found, too, that he had now an army of tolerable strength. His object was to cross the river, if possible, unperceived. Leaving, therefore, his camp-fires burning, he moved off his troops during the night of the 4th and 5th of October, and after a secret and hasty march, admirably executed, he crossed the Rhine unopposed between Coblenz and Andernach. Only when the passage of the river had been safely accomplished and Lewis established in a position among the hills commanding the valleys of the Nette and Brohl did Charles hear of what had been done. Thereupon he broke up his camp at Cologne and marched to Sinzig. Here he was met by messengers from Lewis, once more making proposals of peace, and Charles, upon his part, had recourse to one of those ruses which had so often served his turn better than arms, though to a nicer conscience they might wear the garb of perjury. He proposed a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the 7th of October, to discuss the terms of a treaty of peace. Lewis assented, and on the assumption that a truce was established during the interval he sent off half his army in search of provisions. Charles had no sooner been informed of this by his scouts, than he broke up his

camp at Sinzig, and marched with all his army of fifty thousand men straight for the German camp.

The Germans were saved from surprise by two lucky chances. Willibert, Archbishop of Cologne, Lewis's envoy, found the means of sending a swift messenger to his king to warn him of his danger; and the native guides, who were all for Lewis, managed so to misdirect the army of Charles in this hilly region, that it took twenty-four hours in making a march of some twelve or fourteen miles.

Lewis, meanwhile, not knowing of this delay, but only the peril in which he stood, gathered all the remainder of his army and drew them up in array of battle. Expecting a night attack, in order to avoid confusion and consequent panic, he ordered that every man should put on a white garment over his usual armour. And all the night of the 7th of October the army remained there like a little white cloud resting upon the hills which commanded the valley. It was a miserable night, pouring with rain. But the case of the Germans was not so wretched as that of their opponents, who through all that night floundered about upon false roads, and only in the morning came in sight of their enemy, whom they found small in numbers indeed, but drawn up in a good position and ready for battle.

The first shock fell upon the Saxons who composed Lewis's first line. At the onset of that vast body of fifty thousand Franks, the Saxons shook and gave way somewhat. But the East Franks came up to their support, and the movement of retreat was arrested. And now, on the French side, men perceived that at the first charge Count Hieronymus had gone down, one of the leaders in Charles's army; Count Reginar, too, had fallen with the oriflamme, the imperial banner. The Carling troops had expected to surprise their enemy. Not doing this, they were already disheartened; and by their long night's march they were almost worn out. When they saw their banner fall, and their king came not up to encourage them, they gave way at once upon all sides. They broke and rolled back in irretrievable panic, and Charles, who had never once come to the

front of the battle, could now find nothing better to do than to set spurs to his horse and ride for dear life. He rode all that day, rode far out of the disputed Lotharingian country, and did not draw rein till he had reached Liège, safe in his own territory.

Fortunately for Charles the Bald, he had sent forward his wife, Richildis, who was with child, away from the battle-field, as far as Herstal, in order that she might give tidings of what he deemed a certain victory. But Herstal itself was within the territory of Lewis the Younger, and to Richildis there came the news of the fearful overthrow of the West Franks. Though ill-fitted to travel, she had to flee thence under the charge of the Bishop of Liège and the Abbot of St. Omer. On her way she was brought to bed of a boy, untimely born, and soon to die. This was the last of four children that Richildis had borne to Charles, none of whom attained to manhood.

The battle of Andernach was the greatest which had been fought since Fontenoy. We may call it, too, the first great battle between France and Germany—the first of how long a series! Have we not said that this age was big with the seeds of the future policy of Europe? The defeat was deemed a direct judgment of God upon the perfidy of Charles the Bald. Inexplicable panic had seized the troops of Charles almost at the sight alone of Lewis's little white cloud resting upon its hillside. So some of the prisoners declared.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES THE FAT. THE INVASION OF GERMANY.

I.

THE battle of Andernach took place on the 8th of October, A.D. 876. The Vikings at this moment had begun to return to the Continent; but no large fleet had as yet come thither. For in England the Danes were still advancing to victory over the West Saxons; wherefore, when pirate fleets were newly equipped, most of them were still commissioned for this country. Nevertheless some of the Vikings, seeing the greater part of England already in possession of their brethren, and the remaining portion holding out valiantly against them, remembered the rich abbeys and fat lands of Flanders and France, which had been left undisturbed so long.

When Charles the Bald recovered from the panic into which his defeat had thrown him, he found that his nephew, Lewis, had no intention of carrying his victorious arms into France; on that side, therefore, he might feel secure. But in Italy, but in his imperial title, there was small likelihood that he would be left undisturbed. In any case Carloman might have been expected to try and revenge the trick which had been played upon him the year before. Many of Charles the Bald's former partisans now withdrew their support; and Carloman of Bavaria was, in fact, collecting

A.D. 877.

an army and meditating a fresh incursion into Italy. The Pope, however, remained true to the French alliance; though he did so at his peril. The lesser princes, as we may call them, of central and southern Italy were seeking alliances of any kind, even with the Saracens, against the Carling rule. The Pope, John VIII., too, had long had a personal quarrel with the Duke of Spoleto; his devastating troops and the infidel arms of the Saracens now spread up to the very gates of Rome.[1]

John sent messenger after messenger with the most pressing entreaties to Charles the Bald to come to his aid. This time Charles determined to comply;[2] albeit the fleet of Northmen which had arrived in the Seine the previous year was still plundering in that country unhindered. It is characteristic of Charles's policy during these later years that, without striking one blow to free his country from such a pressing evil as this, he should have set to work to collect an army to march into Italy, and have consented to purchase the departure of the Vikings for the enormous sum of five thousand pounds of silver, equal, one may say, in modern money to as much as £120,000.[3]

Charles put some order into his affairs before he set out. He held a council at Quiersey[4] in which he exacted a fresh oath of fidelity from all the greater vassals. In return he made an important concession to the growing feudalism. He distinctly acknowledged the hereditary principle in the holding of fiefs. It had not been acknowledged, nor were the rights of minors guarded when, ten years before, the possessions of Robert the Strong were handed over to Abbot Hugh, and Robert's sons were left poor and insignificant. Abbot Hugh was now the foremost man in the kingdom; or his only rival was Boso, brother of the empress. This empress and her brother, with Hugh, Hincmar, Bernard, Count of Auvergne, Theodoric, the High Chamberlain, Franco, Bishop of Liège, and Gozlin or

[1] Mansi, xvii. 27, &c.; Jaffé (2nd ed.), 3077–9, 3081 *sqq.*
[2] *Ann. Bert.* s.a. (Pertz, i. 502). [3] *Cf.* Dümmler, *Ostf. Gesch.* ii. 43.
[4] Conventus Cariacensis, ap. Pertz, *Leges*, i. 537 *sqq.*

Jocelin, Abbot of St. Denis, formed, with the Prince Lewis, a sort of regency in the absence of the king. They were specially enjoined not to believe too hastily any rumours of the death of their sovereign. Then Charles set forth upon his march into Italy.

Italy, that fatal land. Everybody was drawn thither by its thousandfold fascinations. Its wealth was of many kinds; of which not the least considered in those days was its wealth in relics, in the bones of saints and martyrs. Every conqueror from the north sought to draw upon this mine of magical power; and failing the use of force, fraud might be legitimately employed to gain possession of the wonder-working bones.[1] But the climate of Italy revenged the country upon her spoilers. It had already struck down one of the Carling princes—Lothair. His father narrowly escaped death what time Wala and Matfrid of Orleans and many another found their graves in Italy. Lewis, the elder son—he, too, had died young. Now Italy called for fresh victims from their house.

Charles had not been long across the Alps. He had met the Pope John at Pavia, and, at a council of 130 bishops held at Ravenna, had been re-elected emperor,[2] when news was brought that Carloman was marching over the Brenner,[3] with forces against which Charles deemed himself unable to make head. He sent back messengers to France to urge on his regents and greater vassals the dispatch of fresh troops. But no one moved: not the favourite Boso, not Abbot Hugh, nor the brave Bernard, Count of Auvergne, nor the other Bernard of Gothia.[4] At the approach of Carloman, therefore, Charles had to retreat once more, to make for the nearest passes where a more inevitable foe was lying in wait for him.

The King of Bavaria, for his part, after he had remained a few months in Lombardy, was struck by illness;[5] some sinister

[1] *Cf.* Einhard, Transl. BB. Marc. et Pet., c. 1 (Migne, t. 104, col. 537–8); Act. SS. Bened. iv. 108, *sq.*; Gfrörer, *Chr. K.* Bk. iii. p. 939.

[2] An election which the Council proclaimed (with small gift of prophecy) was to remain fixed and stable. Jaffé, 2nd ed. i. 394.

[3] Cf. *Ann. Vedast.* s.a. (P. ii. 196.)

[4] *Ann. Bert.* a. 877.

[5] In November, *Ann. Fuld.* a. 877; Muratori, ii. 329; *Ann. Bert.*

effluence from that soil of fevers. It ended in paralysis; and for the rest of his days that handsome, hopeful prince had to sit idly at his country seat of Ötting[1] while his brother Lewis despoiled him of his crown. But to Charles the Italian journey was still more deadly. Hurrying back over Mont Cenis[2] he has been struck down, and burns and shivers in his ague fever. Under the treatment of his Jewish doctor he grew rapidly worse, and ended his life in a châlet in the valley of the Arc, October 6, 877, within two days of the first anniversary of his great defeat at Andernach. Thus upon Lothair, upon Charles, upon Carloman, did Italy revenge herself on the descendants of her conqueror, Charlemagne.

Charles the Bald was not old when he died—not more than fifty-four. But what changes had he not witnessed in the fortunes and in the spirit of the Franks since the day when we first saw him by the knees of his mother at the festivities accompanying the baptism of Harald; or since, twelve years later, he was girt with a sword and proclaimed King of Neustria; or even since the partition of Verdun, four-and-thirty years ago! It is a thought to make one pause. Not one man probably in all Lewis's empire would have dreamed of Frankland vailing her arms before the countrymen of Harald the Dane; as well might you talk to an Englishman to-day of England being invaded by Dervishes or Zulus. Yet the thing had come to be. It had been a long reign this of Charles the Bald, the longer by contrast with those that followed. The succeeding princes of this house were destined to but few years of reign, few and evil; that of the next successor, Lewis the Stammerer, lasted but one year and six months, the king in feeble health all the time.

II.

Lewis the Stammerer fulfilled to the best of his ability those more modest duties of a king of West Francia, which his father

[1] 'Odingas,' Alten Ötting near the Inn.

[2] *Ann. Bert.* (P. i. 504). Poisoned by his Jew doctor according to *Ann. Bert.*

had neglected of late. As for the Cæsarship, that passed away from the western branch of the Carling House. Carloman was struck down before he could enjoy it.[1] Pope John thought of offering it to Boso rather than that it should pass to a German. But it did in the end fall to the youngest of the three German princes, Charles of Swabia, whom we call Charles the Fat.

In the earlier months of 878 we find Lewis marching to assist Hugh the Abbot against the Danes, who were once more ravaging freely along the banks of the Loire. A.D. 878. But in this expedition the king fell ill, and for the brief remainder of his life the government was not really in his hands, but in those of his greater vassals, of whom we just now enumerated the most distinguished.

More and more confusing grow the politics of these days, as each country yields more and more to the centrifugal forces which are tearing it asunder. Mediæval Europe is (we have said it before) in reality a great theocratic republic; an aristocratic republic, too, no doubt, but not really a monarchy or group of monarchies.

Regarded as a game of chess merely, one may take some interest in the movements of the pieces. A game of chess of a new kind; for there are not two games but twenty, each greater piece, almost, constituting a party of its own. For royal pieces we have on one side of the board the three sons of Lewis the German—of whom Carloman must now be withdrawn. On the other side of it we have Lewis and Carloman, the two sons of Lewis the Stammerer. Queens are not wanting. Engelberga, the proud empress, still a factor in politics, though her power is on the wane; and her daughter, a queen-to-be, the not less ambitious Engeltrud, Boso's wife. For knights we have the great chiefs of Germany and Saxony, of Franconia and the East Mark—Arnolf, Carloman's natural son, with a separate rule in Carinthia; the two Ludolfings, Bruno and Otto, almost as independent

[1] He was acknowledged as titular emperor by his partisans in Italy. Dümmler, *o.c.* ii. 99.

in Saxony; Count Henry of Franconia: all famous names, more important in the later years of the century than the names of kings. In the west, names not less famous, names that we know, Hugo, Boso, Theodoric, Conrad, Count of Paris, the two Bernards; and lastly two young warriors who are winning their spurs, Odo and Robert, the sons of Robert the Strong.

For bishops? The great ecclesiastics of the mid-years of the century were now dead or at death's door. Pope Nicholas was dead; Hadrian, his successor, who with lesser powers yet held high the papal dignity, was dead too. John VIII. was far inferior to both in either ability or character. Raban of Mainz, the greatest of scholars, the most venerable of archbishops, had been dead thirty years. Günther of Cologne, Thietgaud of Metz—they too were gone after playing a noisy part on the stage of life. Hincmar alone remained, and he was near his end. But still his interest in affairs of state, and all his ancient fire were not extinct. At the accession of Lewis the Stammerer he had addressed an exhortation to the young king.[1] And for a rising figure we have Gozlin, Abbot of St. Denis, best known as Gozlin the Bishop of Paris;[2] with him we may place his nephew and successor in the abbacy, Ebolus.

III.

Lewis the Stammerer did, as we have said, nothing more that is memorable after that one Danish expedition of his, and he died April 10, 879,[3] a gentle, just, peace-loving man, at least in these later years.

A.D. 879.

At the beginning of the new reign—the joint reign of Lewis and Carloman[4]—a portion of the French *noblesse* made a shameful move. Conrad of Paris and Abbot Gozlin sent to

[1] *Op. Hincmari*, ap. Migne, t. 125, col. 983 *sqq.* [2] See Chapter XV.

[3] *Ann. Fuld.* Apr. 11; *Ann. Bert.* Apr. 10; 'Good Friday in the evening' (Hincmar). Regino's character of him (which may, one thinks, be trusted), is, 'a simple and gentle nature, a lover of peace, of justice, of religion' (Pertz, i. 590).

[4] A posthumous child was born to Lewis's widow—Charles, known in history as Charles the Simple.

offer the crown to the German prince, Lewis the Saxon. Gozlin had been Lewis's prisoner after Andernach. He may have been favourably impressed by the German's character. Conrad again had blood relationship with the Carlings on both sides of the Meuse; that may have been the excuse for his seeming treachery. But Hugo and Boso and Theodoric supported the cause of their young masters. Lewis the Saxon, who had entered France with an army, was induced to come to terms, and, instead of the whole kingdom, to content himself with western Lotharingia. Thus Lothair's kingdom was united in a way precisely the reverse of that which had been the dream of Charles the Bald. Instead of France possessing itself of the eastern portion, Germany possessed itself of the western.

Boso's access of zeal on behalf of his young masters did not last long. He deemed himself too great to be a subject. Charles, according to one account, had already created him a titular king in Lombardy, 'because, like the emperors of old, he would have kings for his subjects.'[1] John VIII. had, we know, thought of him as a possible emperor; but he wisely narrowed his ambition to attainable ends, the erection of his county of Cis-Jurane Burgundy into a kingdom. In the autumn of this year his plans were ripe; and accordingly, on October 15, there met an assembly of bishops and archbishops at Mantaille, near Vienne, and there by the archbishops of Vienne, Lyons, Tarantaise, Aix (les Bains), Arles, and Besançon and their suffragans, Boso was elected king;[2] even the bishops of Macon, Châlons sur Saône, and Autun concurred. These various sees united constituted a large territory—Provence and both the Burgundies—could Boso contrive to hold them all. He could not. His new-made kingdom, which went sometimes by the name of the kingdom of Arles, sometimes of kingdom of Burgundy, was limited to Provence and Burgundy west of the Jura.

[1] Regino, a. 877; he says Provence. For 'king' read 'duke'; for 'Provence' read 'Lombardy.'

[2] Pertz, *Leges*, i. 547; Regino, a. 879 (P. i. 590).

This was a great event, the first snatching of a crown from the Carling House.[1] And it was not likely that the princes of this house would sit down calmly under the affront. They swore eternal hatred to the usurper, and were prepared, it seems, to make an end of him by any means.[2] Charles of Swabia, on whose borders lay the new kingdom, joined with his cousins in this. But, says our chronicler, Boso's skill and valour triumphed over all his outward enemies, and his just rule warded off treachery at home.

In the south-west the French princes had further trouble with Bernard of Gothia; and over in Lorraine, in the territories of Lewis the Saxon, Hugo, Lothair's son,[3] was in revolt, straining every nerve to win for himself a part at least of the territories his father had ruled. Such was the condition of affairs on the Continent one year after the Treaty of Wedmore had relieved this country of the danger of Viking conquest and set free many bands of adventurers to carry their depredations elsewhere.

We read that after Wedmore a fresh body of Vikings came to England and settled at Fulham. Another army, consisting of malcontent Danes who would not accept Christianity or the terms of Ælfred's and Guthorm's peace, made itself a camp at Cirencester. These two armies eventually united; and finding that there was no work for them to do in England, they set sail and crossed over to Flanders. Then they mounted the Scheld. A forewarning of all this had been given in 876 by the appearance of a new Viking fleet in the Seine—a warning to which Charles had remained so obstinately blind. Now the full fury broke loose upon the fat Flemish lands (Belgian and French), where a generation had grown up which knew not the sight of the ghastly Viking fires. St. Omer, which lies in the middle of the long strip of low coast between the Scheld and

[1] With the exception of Brittany, which, however, as so independent always and lying so far to the west, was a much less crying example.

[2] Regino, *l.c.*

[3] Natural son, by Waldrada.

the Somme, was attacked and burned on July 28, 878.[1] Just one year later came the Fulham army.[2] They laid Therouanne in ashes; then crossing the Scheld they passed into Brabant. Hugo, the pretender to north Lotharingia, made a feint of resisting them, and undisturbed they mounted the Scheld in their boats and fell upon Ghent, which had not for thirty years felt the weight of their heavy hand. At Ghent the Vikings formed a winter camp. All through the winter months they spread harrying and burning on both sides of the river, in Brabant and in Flanders.[3] In the spring of 880 they attacked Tournay.

In this fresh invasion of the Continent, as we may call it, Viking leaders new and old come to the front. Strange that the two most important names now before us should be those borne by the two Danish kings who first emerge out of the mist of prehistoric times, and first come into contact with the Franks—Siegfred and Godfred. It is possible, but not probable, that the second of these two is that son of Harald who was baptized along with his father in A.D. 826, whom subsequently we have often seen marauding on the coasts of France. Worm is the name of a third leader. Hasting was still alive, but he remained in the Loire country. And according to some traditions it was about this time that a new leader began to distinguish himself, one who, in fame and in the permanency of his achievements, was to surpass all the other Viking chiefs: I mean Rolf, the future founder of Normandy.[4] A.D. 880.

No one now thought of the kings of Denmark; all attention was absorbed by the new nationality—as we may call it—of the Vikings. It is about this time that even the names of the kings of Denmark drop out of the pages of the Christian chroniclers, and do not reappear till the second half of the

[1] *Ann. Blandienses*, s.a. But *cf.* Dümmler, *o.c.* ii. 130, note. It seems more reasonable to suppose that the attack on St. Omer was a part of the proceedings of the Fulham Army.

[2] *AS. Chron.* [3] *Ann. Vedast.* *Ann. Gand.* (Pertz, ii. 187).

[4] Dudo, *De act. duc. Norm.* i., and the preface to M. Lair's edition.

Viking Age, while we meet with more and more names of the Viking leaders.

After the conclusion of peace—the Peace of Ribemont—between Lewis the Saxon and his cousins the West Frank kings, the former made serious preparations for meeting the Danish inroad in the north. For on him fell, now that he had acquired the whole of Lotharingia, the duty of defending all the coast-line north of the Scheld. The Vikings at the moment lay upon the borders of both kingdoms, ravaging impartially in each. The German king, marching through the territory between the Meuse and the Scheld, came upon a large body of the plunderers under the command of Godfred.[1] The king at once gave the signal to attack; and, by the superior weight of the German troops, the Danes were borne down and almost cut to pieces.[2] This was a hopeful issue to the first attack which for some while Christians had ventured in the open field against their oppressors. But, unhappily, Lewis's natural son, Hugo, a well-loved son, riding impetuously at the head of his troop, was wounded and carried off by the remnant of Godfred's force, who shut themselves in a royal vill, or farm, at Thuin on the Sambre.

The Germans might easily have surrounded and annihilated this small force; and such a disaster, involving the life of their greatest leader, would have been full of discouragement for the late-returned Danes. But the thought of the danger in which lay his dear Hugo held Lewis back. So he sat idly through the night, watching the Danish camp-fires, till the dawn of morning should give him a chance of parleying. But in reality those lights are not the camp-fires of the Danes: they are the funeral-fires of the slain—five thousand of these, it is said. And Hugo's body, that, too, lies there stretched upon the ground looking starward, but with eyes that do not see—no ransom more needed for him. The enemy themselves have stolen off during the night and made their way to their fleet,

[1] Regino, a. 779, 'In silva Carbonaria'—in the Kohlenwald.
[2] Five thousand fell according to *Ann. Fuld.* s.a. 880.

and when Lewis arrives at the camp there will be nothing to be found but dying fires and the body of his son among other slain.[1]

Whatever prestige the Germans may have gained by this victory, the victory itself was not an important one; and it was more than counterbalanced by a fearful defeat which almost at the same time the Saxons suffered at the hands of another body of Danish invaders. At the end of January, 880, a Viking fleet sailed up the Elbe.[2] Thereupon Duke Bruno, on whose hands lay the protection of the Danish mark, gathered a Saxon army and marched against the invaders. The armies met upon that great sterile plain which lies between Hamburg and Hanover, and is known as the Lüneburg Heath. Small chance for the losing side to find shelter anywhere on this open plain. And so it fell out; for the Saxon army was not only defeated, but absolutely cut to pieces.[3] Among the slain was Bruno himself, the head of that famous house of Ludolfings, rich in great men. Bruno dead, his brother Otto became Duke of Saxony.

Worse and worse grew the condition of the lands bordering on the North Sea and the English Channel. The plunderers came up the Waal as far as Xanten, a place which they had not visited for twenty years; they passed beyond Xanten to Nymuegen.[4] In Ghent, Abbot Gozlin gained a victory over them. But another troop mounted to Cambray[5] and ravaged far and near. Among the places which they plundered was St. Bertin,[6] whose chronicles we use. By the end of the spring of 881 they had almost swept bare the country between the Scheld and the Somme. Accordingly in the summer of that year, July, they crossed the river and spread their devastations further south. It was a veritable invasion, and almost of a Tartar kind, like the devastations of

A.D. 881.

[1] Regino; *Ann. Ved.* 880. [2] *Ann. Fuld.* 880.

[3] *A. Fuld.*, ibid., give a long list of the slain.

[4] Regino, 881; *Ann. Fuld.*, 880. Dümmler *o.c.* ascribes these events to the year 879, Sternstrup *o.c.* to 880.

[5] *Ann. Vedast.*, 880. [6] Ibid. a. 881 (December, 880).

a horde of Huns. However, Lewis, the elder of the two kings who governed France, had now collected an army and was marching forward to encounter the enemy, accompanied by what anxious thoughts and prayers on behalf of his subjects we can imagine; Christendom and civilization themselves might seem to hang trembling in the balance. The Danes had pressed forward as far as Beauvais. Lewis on his side crossed the Oise not far from Abbeville, hoping to intercept the Viking army as it returned to the ford of the Somme.[1] The Danes soon came in sight; and at Saucourt,[2] between Abbeville and Eu, the two armies joined battle. Lewis, at the head of his horse, charged the ranks of the Northmen, who gave way, broke and fled towards Saucourt; all but a fragment of their army which still held firm. And as the Franks scattered to plunder, these Danes assumed the offensive, and the Franks in their turn began to fall back. But the French king rallied his troops, charged once more, and broke this remnant of the opposing force.

This was a better feat of arms than any which Charles the Bald could boast of against the same foes. No wonder, therefore, that the fame of Lewis spread far beyond his own country, that his victory was chronicled in England, and that they sang of it in the native German tongue by the banks of the Rhine.[3] Eight or nine thousand Norsemen it is said fell at the battle of Saucourt.[4]

There had been of late so few successes to boast of against the Vikings! This victory checked for a moment the advance of the invaders in the western kingdom; thereby it only went the worse for the eastern one. Now, in fact, began the worst invasion from the Northmen which the lands governed by Lewis the Saxon had ever suffered or would suffer. The Northmen had chosen their time well. Lewis was ill; much more so than men guessed as yet. He had done little since

[1] At 'Latverum' (=Laviers), *Vedast.* [2] 'Sathulcurtis,' Ibid.

[3] The *Ludwigslied*, so called. 'Rithmus Teutonicus de piæ memoriæ Ludovico rege.' See Müllenhoff and Scherer, *Deut. Poesie u. Prosa*, pp. 17–19. See also *Sym. Dun.* and Asser, s.a.

[4] Regino, 8,000; *Ann. Fuld.*, 9,000.

his Thuim victory and the loss of his son Hugo. Carloman, the eldest brother, had died two years previously, after his long enforced *fainéance* at his farm of Ötting. There had he built a church and founded an abbey, and there were his bones now laid.[1] Lewis succeeded him in Bavaria and the Ostmark; Charles of Swabia went over to Italy to claim the kingdom of that country and the imperial crown: he had no thoughts just now to give to the troubles in the north. Arnulf, Carloman's only but illegitimate son, was capable of great things and had a great destiny. But at present he had to look on and see his uncles dividing between them his father's realm.[2] Nominally he became a vassal of Lewis; in reality he ruled almost independently in Carinthia.[3] In Thuringia there were disputes between rival vassals, going to the length of open war. Saxony had lost one of its great chiefs in Bruno. And Hugo, the son of Lothair, was only waiting the opportunity to make good, by any means in his power, his claims on Lower Lorraine. This was the moment at which the Viking leaders, Siegfred and Godfred, assembled their forces for a great invasion of Germany.

IV.

The Vikings began by a widespread plundering over all the country of the Lower Rhine.[4] After that they set out upon their march inland. Nobody was there to collect or take the command of an opposing army, and, the people fleeing out of their way as best they might, the Danes pressed on unhindered to Cologne, the metropolis of Lower Germany, almost the most important archbishopric north of the Alps. The greater part of the town the Vikings destroyed, and reduced its churches to ruins. Then forward to Bonn, which experienced the fate of Cologne. Zülpich, Julich, Neuss, fell at the same time. It might seem that this region which had witnessed the consolidation of the Frankish Empire was destined now to witness

A.D. 881.

[1] Regino, 880. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

[4] For the account which follows see Regino (Pertz, i. 592–596), and *Ann. Fuld.* (P. i. 396–397.)

its entire overthrow. Worst of all they attacked and took imperial Aix itself. Now was fulfilled the threat of old Godfred the Danish king, against Charlemagne, that a Danish army should be seen within his capital; fulfilled by another Godfred, possibly his descendant. Old Godfred had never dreamt of such an easy victory as these Vikings were gaining, of so truculent an entry into the Capital of the Empire. The Northmen stalled their horses in the aisles of the churches which Charlemagne had built, and they plundered and in part burned the palace of the great emperor. From Aix the army passed on to the Abbey of Cornelimunster, and thence made their way into the beautiful Eifel country—that fair Devonian and—which was then no doubt very thinly inhabited. In the midst of that almost desert a bygone Carling prince[1] had established the Abbey of Prüm, which amid its matted brambles[2] lay hidden from the world; yet not so hidden but that the Vikings could find it. It is a place much associated with the history of the Carling House. The great Charles had loved it and freely endowed it. Charles the Bald had been confined there when a boy, by the orders of his brother Lothair; and thither Lothair himself had gone to die when he laid down the imperial sceptre. It still awaited a third scion of the house to end his days in blind imprisonment within its walls; but at the moment *he* was watching, not altogether with discontent, the successes of the Danes.

The Vikings did not reach Prüm until after the beginning of the new year, that is to say, on Twelfth Day, A.D. 882.[3] This day was without question a heathen festival. At Prüm they stayed three days, keeping we need not doubt high wassail. And this marked the farthest period of their advance in this expedition. For they now returned to a camp which they had made and fortified the year previous at Ashloh or Elsloo,[4] a royal villa near Maestricht.

A.D. 882.

Terrible had been the doings of the heathen; and they were

[1] Pippin the Short.

[2] See Förstemann *Altdeutsches Namenbuch* (Ortsnamen), s. v. Prüm.

[3] Regino, a. 882.

[4] 'Alslona' Regino; 'Haslao,' *Vedast.*

answered by signs not less terrible in earth and heaven. An earthquake shook men's very souls;[1] in the January of this year a comet rose flaming into the night,[2] and at the same time,[3] the life ebbed away from Lewis of Germany, who had long been lying ill and incapacitated at Frankfurt.

Now Charles the emperor, once Charles of Swabia, was the inheritor of a vast domain. All the countries which, in former years, had been ruled by the three monarchs—Lewis the German, Lothair the Second, and Lewis the Emperor—were united under his sceptre.[4] He did indeed promise to restore to his cousin the portion of Lorraine which had been ceded by the treaty of Ribemont; but he never fulfilled his promise. All these vast domains were nominally Charles's. But he was too weak to rule in them, or if he ruled to govern. In bad health, not unamiable, and beloved by many of his poorer subjects,[5] he was yet not the man for these disjointed times.

Very soon the Northmen began again to advance up the Rhine. They were met by the joyful news of Lewis's death. Charles was in Italy, and Germany for the time without a ruler. Now was an opportunity for the Vikings to penetrate into the vine-lands which lay above the Mosel. The finest towns of Germany, the richest cathedrals and abbeys lay upon the stream up which their ships were sailing. If their leader Godfred really was—as some have supposed—the same as the Godfred, Harald's son,[6] he might remember through the dim vista of years another occasion on which he had sailed in a white-winged Danish ship up the same reaches; passed Confluentes or Coblenz, where met the streams of Rhine and Mosel, past the Pfalzinsel where

[1] This was at Mainz 'before cockcrow.' *A. Fuld.* (Pertz, i. 394.)

[2] Ibid. p. 395.

[3] Most probably: *Fuld.* 20 Jan.; Regino 20 Aug.; but see Dümmler *Ostfr. Reich.* ii. 163, note 37.

[4] Or say simply the territories of Lothair the Elder and Lewis the German; save that Lothair was only nominally King of Italy.

[5] They pitied him in his fall, and afterwards invented a myth that he had not really died at the time upposed, but would come again and reign over them.

[6] An extremely improbable supposition of course.

Lewis the Pious was carried to draw his last breath, through the narrow neck of river where the Lurlei rock mirrors itself in the swift stream, and up the broader reaches of the rich Rhinegau, as far as lordly Mainz. Now in a very different guise from that of humble, white-robed catechumens, and with fire and famine as their handmaids, he and his Danes set out upon the same journey. The people, sheep without shepherds, offered slight resistance. We have no details of this invasion. Those children of chaos, wherever they went, surrounded themselves with a cloud of darkness; for all that had any semblance of civilization fled at their approach. All the land between the Meuse and the Rhine, at any rate from Coblenz downwards, was in their hands, and it was passing more and more under the sceptre of Chaos and Old Night. And this was the region in which had been planted the germ of the mighty empire of the Franks. So far backwards had the Northmen contrived to roll the car of history. All of the Christians who could get there sheltered themselves within the walls of Mainz. Fortunately the invaders never got so far as this town. From Coblenz they turned up the Mosel and burnt Treves.

As the Danes were thinking of returning to their strong camp at Ashloh, the news reached them, and passed along all good Christian lips, that the new emperor, Charles, had come again across the Alps; that he had held a diet at Worms,[1] and there had summoned contingents from every part of the empire. He was forming a great army, with which he was about to make a strenuous effort to rid Germany for ever from the Viking scourge.

And it was a huge army which now assembled under the banner of Charles.[2] From Italy he had brought a body of Lombards, who were in this wise once again to revisit the neighbourhood of their own ancestral home, and once more to fight shoulder to shoulder with their ancient kinsmen, the Saxons. Contingents from all the German nationalities were with Charles's colours; his own Swabians; Bavarians under the leadership of Arnulf; East Franks under Duke Henry;

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* a. 882. [2] Regino, a. 882.

Thuringians, Saxons, Frisians—who can count them all? A formidable host, had it been commanded by a *man*: if Arnulf, for example, instead of being second in command, could have been first.

But Siegfred and Godfred stood manfully to their arms; good scouts in front, and the strong place at Elsloo in their rear. Time alone could show whose confidence was the better placed. At Andernach, a place of good omen for German hearts, the imperial army made a momentary halt; two corps from out of it, Arnulf's Bavarians, Henry and his Franks, were sent forward by rapid marches to overtake, if possible, the Northmen before they reached their stronghold. But the Vikings—by treachery say the chroniclers: by the excellence of their intelligence department say we—were warned of the danger and made good their retreat.

Presently Charles with the main army came up to the Danish camp, and the siege of Ashloh began about the middle of July, 882. It had endured a week or so when there fell a hail-storm of extraordinary violence with stones as big as cricket-balls, if we are to believe what the chroniclers tell us.[1] The timid Christians, grown superstitious through their fears, saw them, no doubt, increased to ten times their real dimensions; and, having learnt to tremble at everything, thought they discerned the hand of God directed against themselves. We will hope that it was only the baser spirits in the army of Charles who thus trembled.[2] In reality the storm had done more harm to the defenders than to the attacking party; for part of the walls of the Danish camp were knocked down. But, unfortunately in the number of this baser sort was the emperor himself; and he at last, by the persuasion of two traitorous councillors,[3] was induced to open negotiations with Siegfred and Godfred. Finally, Charles promised an immense indemnity to the Danes if they would retire from his territories.

Great must have been the joy in every Viking heart in

[1] They could not be spanned by the thumb and finger. Dümmler, *o.c.*, ii. 203.

[2] Regino, *l.c.*

[3] *Ann. Fuld.* 882.

Ashloh, and fine the contempt of the Danes for the Christians when these conditions of peace were made known. For in fact the Northmen had been reduced to their last extremity even during these few days of siege, owing to their want of time or of foresight to lay in a stock of provisions. This was a second and more disastrous siege of Oissil; without the excuse which Charles the Bald had had for letting the Danes go scot free. As if this humiliation of their adversaries were not enough, the Danes now gave one more proof of their insolence and barbarity. Placing a shield over their walls (which was their token of peace [1]) they threw open the gates of their fortified camp to all comers. People of every description flocked into the town; some to admire the wonderful build and equipment of these heathens, some to chaffer for the treasures which they had to sell. We can fancy the sutlers passing in and out among the tents, of whom no small proportion were doubtless Jews, bargaining for jewels, precious relics, books, and crucifixes, which had been robbed from half the churches and abbeys in the Rhineland; offering in their turn arms and armour, gold and silver ornaments, and dresses of silk and fine linen. But while all this was proceeding, of a sudden the shield was taken down, the gates were shut; then the Vikings fell upon the defenceless crowd within their walls and made a massacre of the Christians: a wonderful picture of the ferocity of the Northmen. And a not less striking example was it of the pusillanimity of Charles, that he did not at once break off all negotiations with these barbarians and begin the siege once more at whatever disadvantage. On the contrary, he chose only to look the other way; not to see the crime which had been perpetrated before his eyes, and to fulfil the conditions of the treaty as if nothing had happened. These conditions involved the payment of an immense sum, 2,400 or 2,800 pounds of silver and gold, or 48,000 solidi. The solidus here spoken of is not a piece of coined money, only the solidus of account. It is impossible to make an accurate comparison between values in those days and values at the present day. But it would be

[1] *Ann. Fuld.* 882.

safe at any rate to reckon these 48,000 solidi as not less than £120,000 sterling.

But this was not all that Charles surrendered. On condition of Godfred embracing the Christian religion, which he declared his willingness to do, he received the grant of an immense territory on the Rhine and the Waal. And presently he married a scion of the Carling House, Gisla [1] or Gisella, sister of Hugh of Lorraine (so we may call him), and therefore a natural daughter of Lothair II. The Danes who did not choose to settle down under Godfred—a settlement almost comparable to that of Guthorm-Æthelstan in our country—took their share of the 48,000 solidi and consented to abandon for the nonce the territories of Charles the Emperor.

It was a treaty to make angels weep. Well might men draw a contrast between the conduct of Charles, with all the vast resources of the empire at his back, and that of Lewis of France with his little band of Franks at Saucourt.

V.

It would be no wonder if a movement had been made in Germany for deposing Charles and putting his nephew Lewis in his place. Perhaps the Ludwigslied was written about this time with the object of exciting enthusiasm for the scheme. But, as ill-fortune would have it, Lewis himself put an end to all such hopes. This young prince in the prosecution of a love-affair, and a little the worse for liquor, as we may surmise, pursued a reluctant damsel who fled before him to her father's house. Lewis was on horseback; and either unable to stop his horse, or forgetting to stoop sufficiently, his shoulder struck against the archway of the court-yard; whereby he received such injuries that he died shortly afterwards.[2]

Now, therefore, young Carloman was left alone upon the throne of France, a mere boy, in indifferent health, without

[1] Arnolf likewise had a sister Gisella; another Gisella married (or did not marry) Rolf of Normandy. *Gisl* in Old Norse is a hostage; so we cannot be sure that all these are proper names.

[2] *Ann. Vedast.* (P. ii. 199).

prestige or power. What was there for him to do but, as he himself said, to look up to Abbot Hugh as to a father?[1] It would appear as if the race of Charlemagne were becoming exhausted, when we see, as we do, the whole of his empire divided between these two rulers, Carloman and Charles the Fat, the weak in body and the weak in mind.[2]

The difficulties which beset these two princes did not in the meantime grow less. It may have seemed a gain to have got the terrible Godfred turned into a Christian, married to a Christian wife, and settled where he could (if he would) defend the interior of the empire against fresh Northern invasions. But then we must remember who Godfred's wife was; sister to none other than the 'tyrant' Hugo who was willing to sacrifice every principle of duty to win back his father's kingdom of Lorraine. One of the typical 'bastards' of romance, in truth, was this Hugo. He was getting more and more violent in his ways, executing on the slightest suspicion some of his oldest and most faithful servants.[3]

The Western Kingdom was, in its turn, obviously exposed to fresh dangers by the conclusion of peace at Elsloo. The victory of Saucourt had thrown the Vikings upon Germany; the conclusion of peace with the emperor, coinciding with the death of Lewis, invited a large number back to France. This contingent departed under the command of Siegfred, and many districts of France which had been long free from attack groaned again under the cruelties of the invaders. Each month the Northmen grew bolder, and advanced their lines nearer to the centre of France. After leaving the Meuse, which now lay within Charles's territory, they betook themselves to the Scheld, the border river, and sailed up that stream to Condé, where for a while they had their headquarters. Abbot Hugh had gone off to confer with the emperor at

[1] *Cf.* Bouquet, ix. 431 and 435.

[2] There was another West Frank prince, a posthumous son of Lewis the Stammerer, and then quite an infant. He afterwards came to the throne, and is known in history as Charles the Simple.

[3] Regino, s.a. 883 (P. i. 593–4).

Worms, and the knowledge of his absence made the Vikings more bold. From Condé they pressed on through the forest of Thierache,[1] a wild forest in those days, stretching from Scheld to the Meuse. When they emerged thence the Danes found themselves in a new country. They marched upon Laon, where the Vikings had never before been seen. This citadel upon the rock, a favourite seat of the West Frank Carlings, stood out of their reach. But not so Rheims hard by; and there the town walls, dismantled by Ebbo long years ago, had never been restored. Hincmar, grown very old, still watched over his charge. But with the city and its inestimable relics left so defenceless, Hincmar, weak and old as he was—*vecchio e tardo*, 'old and slow,' as Dante says—had to flee away by night, carrying the relics with him.

The Northmen rode right up to the town; but for some unexplained reason—which contemporary writers have no difficulty in recognizing as the special intervention of Providence—they did not penetrate within the walls. Perhaps the very defencelessness of the place made them suspect an ambush. About this time, moreover, Carloman, who, with Abbot Hugh, had marched up to bar their further progress, encountered portions of the Viking army and gained two victories over them.[2]. Very soon after this flight from Rheims, and no doubt as a result of it, Hincmar died.[3] His hand seems almost to the last moment to have been holding the pen which he wielded with such power; for his *Annals of St. Bertin* carry us on to the summer of A.D. 882. He had been Archbishop of Rheims since A.D. 845; two years, that is to say, after the Peace of Verdun. But he had taken some part in public affairs much earlier. For it was through his intercession with Lewis the Pious that Hildwin, Abbot of St. Denis, was restored to favour in A.D. 834. He had certainly been a witness of a wonderful—even a miraculous—decay in

[1] *Ann. Vedast.* (P. ii. 200).

[2] Ibid. One in the wood of Vicogne preceded the attack on Laon; one at Avaux sur Aisne followed it. *Cf. Chron. Remense*, 882.

[3] Ibid., Dec. 21, 882.

the empire and in the Carling name. It is an undoubted fact that at this juncture men were seriously disquieted by the fear of a complete heathen conquest of the empire, German and French, north of the Alps. Then, if the Saracens had pushed forward from the south, might there not have ensued what would have been tantamount to a second fall of the Roman Empire? Anarchy was spreading like a mildew; from without first, but now from within. Open robbery prevailed on every side: Christians were abandoning Christianity here, as the Gaill-Gaedhil were doing over in Ireland, and joining the ferocious Northmen. Many saw in all this a forewarning of the end of the world. Could peace be found upon the earth? Look south, where Duke Boso, or King Boso, was still maintaining himself by arms against the power of France, and draining away in this war the sinews of the kingdom. Nowhere did the danger to Christendom restrain the feuds or the ambitions of the great vassals. In Germany there was a Count Poppo, of Thuringia, at war with a Francian, Count Egino;[1] there was Count Aribo in the Eastmark, whose rule was disputed by Wilhelm and Engelschalk, the children of the late marquis, Arnulf joining in from Carinthia on one side, Zwentibold from Moravia upon the other.[2] Such was the condition of Christendom upon which Hincmar's sad eyes closed in December, 882.

A.D. 883.

All round their headquarters at Condé, as far as the Scarpe and as the Somme, the Vikings sent their devastating hordes during this winter, 882–3.[3] In the summer they harried Flanders. Carloman did what he could to defend his territories. But his soldiers had lost all nerve and energy. It seemed as if the Northmen had only to stretch out their hands and take what they would. Although, therefore, the king had stationed himself with an army of observa-

[1] *Ann. Fuld.*, Pt. v., 882, says: 'Bellum . . . inter Saxones et Thuringos.' *Cf.* also 883. But probably for 'Saxones' we should read 'Francos.' See Dümmler, *o.c.* ii. 215.

[2] *A. F.*, *l.c.*, 884.

[3] *Ann. Vedast.* s.a. (P. i. 200).

tion upon the banks of the Somme, he did not venture to engage the enemy, but retreated as they advanced, and fell back upon Amiens; at each step he was pushed nearer to the centre of his kingdom.

A meeting of Neustrian nobles was held at Compiègne to consult what could be done. Clearly the presence of the king and the royal army was no longer any protection. They must act for themselves. But the kind of action which they chose was of a miserable kind—nothing better than the old expedient of buying off the enemy. A Christian Dane[1] was sent to parley with the invaders, and the ransom finally fixed upon was the enormous sum of twelve thousand pounds of silver. We may put the value of this in modern money at not less than £300,000. On this basis a truce was made with the West Franks. A portion of the Viking army took ship and sailed round to the north of the Scheld mouth, returning once more into German territory.

VI.

And here dangers of all kinds had begun again to thicken round the path of the emperor. Little trust could Charles's subjects place in his power to defend them. But among the German nobles there were still brave men left. As in France Abbot Hugh seemed to be the mainstay of the State (though even he had grown strangely inactive of late), so for Germany there was still a defender in Duke Henry of Franconia. Early in 883 a new body of Vikings came into the country of the Lower Rhine. Godfred had been enfeoffed with his vast territories in Frisia on the understanding that he was to defend these parts; but he made no opposition to the new inroad. The new-comers formed a camp at Duisburg, at the junction of the Ruhr with the Rhine, and not far from Düsseldorf. In the autumn of 884 half the immense indemnity of 12,000 pounds of silver was paid over to the French Viking army at Amiens;

A.D. 883.

A.D. 884.

[1] 'Siegfred, the grandson of Horik [which Horik?] *Ann. Vedast.* 884.

and it left the country.[1] Part of the army sailed across the channel and attacked Rochester, where they met with a very different treatment at the hands of Ælfred's soldiers from any they had been used to in France.[2] They got no indemnity here; rather, as a Norse poet sings,

> 'They got smart blows instead of shillings,
> And the hammer's weight in place of rings.'

Another portion sailed to Louvain, in Belgium, and settled there.[3] In December of this year the Christians could rejoice in the report of a victory which a saint—that saint, too, himself a Dane by birth—had gained over a new and large Viking host. Rimbert had once been a Danish slave, and was brought up by Anscar to be a missionary to his countrymen. He became the biographer of Anscar, and was at this time Archbishop of Bremen. When a Danish fleet landed at Norden, Rimbert summoned the hardy Frisians under his banner and attacked them. He himself stood aside from the fray, upon a mound, offering up prayers for the Christians. The victory was a brilliant one; the chroniclers tell us that the whole Viking host, ten thousand strong, was destroyed.[4]

But a defeat here and there did nothing to daunt the courage of the Northmen. The most formidable of all those settled in imperial territory were, of course, the troops of Godfred. Godfred had nominally turned Christian and defender of the empire, but was in reality, it was feared, only plotting with his brother-in-law Hugh fresh attacks upon Charles the Fat. Before long he paved the way to renewed hostilities by putting forth new and impossible demands.[5] He was discontented with the territory assigned to him. It contained no wine-growing country. To supply this want he asked for the lands, the beautiful vine-lands, lying between the Mosel and Bonn, Coblenz, Andernach, Sinzig, &c. Had

A.D. 885.

[1] Regino (P. i. 594). [2] Asser, s.a.; Æthelweard, iv. 3.

[3] Regino, *l.c.*; *Vedast.*, s.a.

[4] *Ann. Fuld.* 884 (Pt. iv.); Adam of Bremen, *Gest. H. Pont.* i. 41.

[5] *Ann. Fuld.*, *l.c.*, and Regino (Pertz, i. 594-6) for the following account.

the request been granted, the Vikings would have been placed in a position a thousand times stronger for any future attack upon the heart of the empire. But they probably cared little whether the grant were made or refused. Godfred had, no doubt, prepared his plans, and was ready to march against any army which Charles could collect. The emperor, if defeated, would probably have been deposed; and Godfred would have ruled behind the name of Hugh of Lorraine, another Orestes behind another Romulus. And pleasant was the outlook for the servants of Charles the Emperor should the furious Hugo ever gain any power over them. Yet how was the request which Godfred preferred to be refused? There was no open way.

But there were other ways which were not open, and these began to be whispered between the emperor and Duke Henry. The latter may have sought to reconcile it to his conscience to use towards the Norsemen means which they themselves never scrupled to employ. Godfred was invited to a conference for the discussion of his demands. On the imperial side came Duke Henry, with Willibert, Archbishop of Cologne, who, however, was kept in ignorance of the intended treachery, and certain of the lesser nobility, among whom was a Count Eberhard, or Everard, who had a short time before been driven from his possessions by Godfred. It should have raised some suspicion in the mind of the Dane to see such an inveterate enemy among the plenipotentiaries; but the Northmen, though full of treachery themselves, were often strangely blind to it in others; or they seemed sometimes, as we have said before, to go down to meet their fate open-eyed.[1]

The meeting took place upon the Batavian island, just where the mouth of the Rhine, which continues to bear that name, separates from the one called the Waal. After some preliminary conference, during which Godfred's suspicions, if he had any, were laid to sleep, Archbishop Willibert was despatched to bring Godfred's wife, Gisla, to act as a mediator between the two parties. Gisla had been sent the year before

[1] See Chapter V.

with a message to the emperor, and had been retained by him as a hostage. Before she was brought back the two conferring parties met again. And now that Godfred was unsuspicious and his attendants unarmed, there was no difficulty in finding a cause of quarrel or in raising the hot blood of the Danes. As the altercation grew warm, Eberhard suddenly drew his sword and cut down the Viking leader; then the imperialists fell upon the attendant Danes and massacred them. And now the Danish host, left without a leader, laid aside the scheme of conquest which Godfred and Hugo had hatched between them. Hugo himself had been invited to attend another conference at Gondreville; and almost at the very time that Godfred fell he was taken prisoner. He was tried, and condemned to lose his eyesight and to be confined for the remainder of his days in a monastery; and the place selected was Prüm, which had already received one royal captive and one voluntary prisoner of the Carling race. There Hugo ended his days about the close of the century.

Meantime a new Viking fleet, with which Godfred had been in secret communication, broke into Saxony. The Saxons had the memory of a recent and terrible disaster weighing upon them. Nevertheless, they assembled in large numbers to resist this attack. Their army was able to keep the Vikings in check; but at present it had avoided a pitched battle, which the Saxons may well have looked forward to with some fear. While affairs were still in this doubtful condition a fleet of Frisians suddenly appeared upon the Elbe. Thus the Danes were exposed to attack both in the front and rear; and Saxons and Frisians joined battle at the same time. After a sharp engagement, the Christians gained a decisive victory. The Frisians, with their fleet, then took possession of the fleet of the Danes, and possessed themselves of all their accumulated treasure. In this wise the summer of 885 turned a brighter prospect towards the Germans, and the news of their victory resounded on all sides. In England they heard of it, and recorded it with thanksgiving.

In reality it was of much more significance than con

temporaries supposed. This year was really a turning-point in the history of the German states. The death of Godfred and the victory on the Elbe checked the ardour of the Vikings, and did indeed save the country. Before their memory was wiped out by fresh successes, the energy of the Northmen had turned in another direction. Germany had been in imminent danger of an absolute conquest; but that danger never returned.

In the western kingdom, whither the other great leader, Siegfred, had betaken himself, there was still one deadly struggle to be fought out and a long period of almost anarchy to be passed through; then that land, too, though scarcely knowing it, would have passed through the crisis of the Viking malady. And though, like Ireland, like England, it was for good or evil (for good *and* evil) never to get rid of the effects of these attacks, still out of the state of prostration in which it now lay it would before long rise to a gradual and hopeful convalescence.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS.

I.

ABOUT the time that St. Rimbert and his Frisians were gaining that encouraging victory of theirs over the Danes at Norden, and that Godfred and Hugo were preparing the great stroke for which in the end they both paid so dear, Carloman, the young King of France, lay dying.[1] 'From a wound received out hunting,' ran the official bulletin, 'in a forest near Andelys.'[2] Yes; but the animal who inflicted the wound was a two-legged one, not a wild boar as men were told; it was one of Carloman's young companions named Berhthold.[3] It was an accident; and the story of the wild boar had been circulated by Carloman himself, for fear lest popular feeling should, after his death, make a victim of the author of it. It is curious that two of the West Frank princes should have met their death from wounds accidentally inflicted by one of their comrades during a hunting expedition.

The only remaining descendant of Charles the Bald was Charles (the Simple), the posthumous son of Lewis the Stammerer, still quite a child. In such troublous times as those it was not to be thought of that an infant of five years

[1] Dec. 12, 884. [2] 'The forest of Basin' (*Ved.*).

[3] *Ann. Lemovic.*; *Ann. Laubac*; *Ann. Vedast.*, the best authorities. Regino gives both stories (P. i. 594).

should occupy the throne of the West Franks. So nothing remained, or it seemed that nothing remained, but to offer the crown to Charles the Fat, who thus at length appears, by the gift of Death and Fortune, as the ruler of all the vast empire which his great-grandfather, Charlemagne, had created: all, that is, save the kingdom of Arles, or Southern Burgundy, where Boso still maintained himself against the world.

It was into a melancholy inheritance and into a charge of heavy responsibility that Charles the Fat now stepped. No sooner had the news of Carloman's death been carried as far north as Louvain, where lay the bulk of those Vikings who, under Siegfred, had quitted France the year before, than these broke up their camp, murdered their hostages,[1] and prepared to descend once more into French territory. When the Neustrian nobles heard what the Northmen had done they sent a message of remonstrance. Had they not been promised twelve thousand pounds of silver on condition of leaving the country free? They answered that their agreement was with the dead king—to leave him in peace. Now that the grave had taken him into its charge they could disturb that peace no more. What a prospect did this insolent reply open out for France during the coming year![2] A brave man might have shrunk from accepting the responsibilities of kingship there. Charles the Fat did not shrink. But what sort of a sword and buckler he proved to the unhappy country we shall presently see. It shows the prestige which still lingered round the Carling name, that it was still thought absolutely necessary to chose for France a king of that race. A.D. 885.

Charles was in Italy when an embassy from the nobility of France, at the head of whom was Hugo of Tours, came to offer him his new crown. He set out upon his return journey early in the spring; and by the middle of April he had reached Lake Constance. When he approached nearer to the scene of conflict he ordered out the hereban of Lotharingia and Neustria

[1] Kept till the residue of the twelve thousand pounds of silver, promised in the previous year, should have been paid.

[2] See Regino, *l.c.*

against the Danes in Louvain. But he did not himself make any show of taking the command; and bereft of trustworthy leaders—for Hugo seems to have been wounded[1]—the new army made scarcely an attempt to attack the Vikings' camp. Presently it dispersed, each man returning to his own home.[2]

Anon, when the summer was more advanced, the Vikings' sails were again descried off the French coast;[3] and now Siegfred's fleet, which during the last few years had nearly plundered bare the country of the Scheld and Somme, made for the Seine, which, save for one visit in A.D. 876, had for twenty years been spared from attack. Rouen once more felt the devastating arms of the pirates: she was plundered on the 25th of July, 885.[4] She had not seen the enemy within her gates for four-and-forty years. According to some accounts there served in this Viking army, and thus for the moment in the country which was afterwards Normandy, the great Rolf himself. The hereban of Neustria summoned up courage sufficient to march against the Danes; but almost at the first onset its leader, Count Reginald of Maine, was killed;[5] the rest of the army thereupon dissolved in panic, and the Northmen spread havoc all around. They began to advance farther up the Seine. Paris was their object, Paris, the 'Queen of Cities,'[6] which barred all progress beyond it along the great trade artery of France. Among the most fruitful of the engineering works set on foot by Charles the Bald, had been the furnishing of Paris with fresh fortifications, and blocking the river by a bridge.

[1] *Ann. Ved.*, 885. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

[6] Nam medio Sequanæ recubans, culti quoque regni
Francigenum, temet statuis per celsa canendo:
'Sum polis, ut regina micans omnes super urbes.'
Abbo, *Bell. Paris. urbis*, i. 10–12.

One must blush, in quoting Abbo, for the wretchedness of his verse, perhaps, taken for all in all, throughout the long poem, as bad as any that the Middle Ages have produced; as the prose of Saxo Grammaticus may be reckoned among the worst Latin prose in existence. Nevertheless, Abbo is our only authority for the details of this great siege of Paris, of which he was an eyewitness. The leading events are told shortly in *Ann. Vedast.*, &c.

Meantime the emperor remained far from all these troubles. He was at present at Regensburg (Ratisbon), upon the Danube. The winter of 885–886, while the Northmen were drawing closer and closer the meshes of an immense fleet and army round the chief city of his new kingdom, he seems to have passed as far away as possible from the scene of conflict, in Italy.

Nearer and nearer came the Danes, their ships—seven hundred large vessels, and innumerable smaller craft—hid the water for two leagues and a half; so, at all events, Abbo would have us believe. A huge army of thirty thousand or forty thousand men marched along the banks or sailed in the vessels.[1] And the emperor was far off; and men's hearts were paralyzed with fear. Where was Hugo, the mainstay of Western France? Wounded it must be, in that he still stayed away from the theatre of war. But happily the royal city is not without defenders. Foremost among these is its bishop, Gozlin, late Abbot of St. Denys. And, after him, Count Odo, now Count of Paris, the eldest son of France's old champion, her Judas Maccabæus, Count Robert the Strong. Odo and Robert, left children at the untimely death of their father, had seen his honours and fiefs passed over to another, to Hugh. Now they were grown to man's estate, and were to show that they had inherited something better than abbeys and titles from their renowned father. Next to them we may count among the chief defenders of Paris Eblus or Ebolus, the nephew of Gozlin, himself also an ecclesiastic and Abbot of St. Germain des Prés; Counts Reginar, Herivæus, Utto, Erilang, a Knight Robert, and many more, deserve commemoration.[2]

Here, then, stands Paris upon her island. Since the days of her earlier attacks at the hands of the Northmen, Charles the Bald had, as we have said, furnished her with two bridges built upon strong stone piers. One connected the island city with the north bank of the river, the other with the south—

[1] Abbo, *o.c.* i. ll. 27–35, 115. [2] Ibid. ll. 66–8, 95–113, 167, 245–6.

Insula te gaudet, fluvius sua fert tibi gyro
Brachia, complexo muros, mulcentia circum;
Dextra tui pontes habitant tentoria lymphæ
Lævaque claudentes; horum hinc inde tutrices
Cis urbem speculare falas, citra quoque flumen.[1]

She was, we see, still an island city washed by the river. The northern bridge, which stood where the Pont-au-Change now stands, was defended by a wooden tower, hastily erected or enlarged upon the approach of the great fleet. The successor to this tower was the Grand Châtelet of the Middle Ages, which stood where the Place du Châtelet now stands.

Siegfred, when he came opposite the city, first sought a meeting with its Governor, Bishop Gozlin.[2] To him he declared that the Danes had no other object but to pass higher up the river, and that, if such passage under the walls of the town were granted them, no injury should be done to person or property within; which protestations those might believe who chose. Gozlin decisively refused to believe them, or to grant the permit that was asked; and breathing threats of vengeance Siegfred took his departure and the siege began.

The most valiant of the garrison were told off to defend the tower[3]—the *tête de pont*—at the end of the northern bridge, against which the first attacks of the Vikings must be directed. Gozlin had made every effort to complete the structure of this fort, but it does not seem yet to have been quite finished.[4] Round it raged for two days an incessant combat. The defendants were but two hundred,[5] the assailants were the countless host of the Danes. Whatever deficiencies the Vikings still showed in the arts of peace as they were understood in those days, in the arts of war they were now passed masters. They had learned all there was to learn from the military traditions of France, the best of which were traditions handed down from the days of ancient Rome. Thus in this siege many of the implements of whose use we read accounts (under new names, perhaps), are such old implements of attack and

[1] Abbo, *o.c.* i. ll. 15–19. One of Abbo's involved passages.
[2] Ll. 36 *sqq.* [3] Ll. 61 *sqq.* [4] Ll. 78–9.
[5] Ll. 114 *sqq.* [P is the Greek numeral, ϱ].

defence as we can recognize portrayed upon the column of Trajan, or described in Roman military history. Here we see battering-rams, *testudines*, *musculi*,[1] such as Cæsar describes for us in the 'Civil War': these now figure in the hands of rude barbarian Northmen, to whom Roman civilization as a whole was but a vague tradition, or a shadowy myth. The defenders, too, employed all the known arts of those days to keep the enemy at bay. But though few of their implements or their opponents' were really new, yet in reading the account of the siege we might fancy sometimes that we had passed ten centuries down the stream of time; as when we behold the leaden balls raining against the tower or flying over the heads of the garrison; or the Vikings advancing to practise a mine in the defences.

The morning of the 26th of November, the day after Siegfred's dismissal by Gozlin, the northern army moved out from its tents to attack the tower. Count Odo and Count Robert were both within it; so were Abbot Ebolus and Count Ragenar. All day the storm of battle raged round the fort and its two hundred defenders. From within every arrow found its mark in the dense masses of the enemy; boiling pitch and boiling oil descended upon the heads of those who came under the defences. They had to rush and plunge into the river to extinguish the flames. Yet if any showed signs of holding back they were assailed by the jeers and reproaches of their woman kind, just as a thousand years before had been the Teutones who invaded Gaul and Italy.[2] Such had always been the part played in battle by those viragoes of the North. At last the besiegers drew off, with heavy loss and without having accomplished anything. And yet they had taken the Christians at a disadvantage, for the defences of the tower were not as complete as they might have been made. During the night after this first attack the bishop made unheard-of efforts to complete or increase these defences by a wooden structure, and in the morning the fort stood twice as high as it had stood overnight.[3]

[1] L. 99. [2] Ll. 125 *sqq.*; *cf.* Plutarch, *Marius*, 19. [3] L. 82.

The second day's fight was like the first. Again the slings or *mangonels* hurled stones and leaden balls against the tower. The enemy brought *musculi* or *mantlets* against the walls—wheeled houses protected against fire by skins stretched over the roof—but the oil and pitch pouring from the tower drove back the Danes. Not, however, before a mine had been made under one of the walls which did some harm. A mine,[1] not of course sprung with gunpowder, but dug under the defences, its roof perhaps supported by wooden beams for a while. Then these were set on fire, and the whole structure crumbled down. Such mining was known as long ago as the days of the ancient Egyptians.

This mine did no great damage. Baffled in these attempts the Vikings made another.[2] They raised a bonfire near the wooden walls of the fort, and for a time the building was in imminent danger. But a heavy rain descended and put the fire out. And now the oriflamme, the sacred banner of St. Denis, was displayed from the city walls—held up between two lances, not floating free in the air; such was the manner of standard-bearing in these days. 'The hearts of the garrison are raised, the Danes oppressed by the sight: a hundred catapults discharge and stretch dead a hundred of the besiegers.'[3] In this wise ended the second day's assault. The Danes carried off the slain to be burnt with due honour in their camp; and we may picture the red funeral fires and the cries of the mourners round them keeping awake this night, the 27th of November, 885.

Now came a momentary pause.[4] After two days' incessant fighting the Northmen began to see that the bridge was not to be carried by a *coup de main*. They now, therefore, established themselves in a strong camp of observation in the Abbey of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and they sent out bands of foragers to harry the country far and near, and to collect provisions for the camp and for the navy during the winter. Their cavalry

[1] 'Foramen,' l. 136. It is possible that the word means only a breach. (See Du Cange s.v.)

[2] Ll. 144 *sqq.* [3] L. 157. [4] Ll. 172 *sqq.*

extended its raids as far to the north as Rheims. From many parts of France messengers were speeding towards the emperor in Italy, showing how all the country was falling into the hands of the heathen. But Charles was long before he moved. Never had Northern Christendom seemed so near becoming an utter prey to the Northmen as it seemed just now.

II.

Through the earlier winter months the garrison had rest. But at the end of January a new attack on the tower was begun in due form. The Danes came swarming out of their camp like bees— A.D. 886.

> En proles Satanæ subito castris furibundæ
> Erumpunt, trepidis nimium telis oneratæ;
> Ad turrim properant, tenues ut apes sua regna
> Distentis adeunt humeris casiaque thymoque
> Arboreisque simul vel amœni floribus agri.[1]

Always did the Vikings bring to bear all the engineering skill they could command. They made *Plutei* or *Musculi*[2] covered with hides, each capable of holding from four to six men. 'They make (strange sight)[3] three machines of unequalled size, mounted on sixteen wheels, and fashioned of huge pieces of oak bound together. On each machine is placed a battering-ram, covered by a high roof. Within the house they could hold concealed, it is said, sixty men.' Such is Abbo's description of a sort of tower well known in mediæval warfare, but a machine, we gather, not known to the garrison of Paris. However, for some reason this mighty engine was never used. The fire from the Christian side destroyed not only the machines but the engineers of them,[4] and in that way put an end to the work.

> Plumbea mille volant fusa densissime mala.

[1] Ll. 227–231.

[2] These *musculi*, 'rats' or 'cats,' were low-roofed sheds running on wheels or rollers, and gradually pushed up to the walls so that the besiegers might begin to breach them. The roofs of the *musculi* were covered with hides to make them as far as possible fire-proof.

[3] Ll. 205 *sqq.*

[4] 'Artifices.'

In three divisions [1] the Danes advanced under *testudines*,[2] shielding them from the missiles of the garrison, one division against the tower, two against the bridge. Before the first they tried to fill up the foss [3] by pouring into it clods of earth, straw, grass, leaves, branches, slaughtered animals; and at last —oh, horror!—they massacred their prisoners and threw their bodies in among the rubbish. They brought their battering-rams to bear against the wooden tower, which trembled from base to summit. Against them plied the arbolasts and mangonels of the defenders, and long iron-pointed beams wherewith they used to strike and disable the battering-rams of the Danes.[4] Next the besiegers filled three of their ships with inflammable materials and towed them alongside the bank as near as might be to the tower and the bridge.[5] The wind, we may suppose, was blowing up the stream, so that when the boats had to be abandoned they were still wafted nearer and nearer to the defences. The citizens looked on in an agony of terror. What a clamour and hubbub within the walls! tears, prayers, and groans arising on every side; the church bells ringing; the brazen roofs of the churches sending up, as missiles struck them, a lugubrious groan; trumpets sounding; men calling to arms. Outside the Danes answer with their wild laughter or their battle cries, singing perhaps against their shields with Odin's sound the barritus, or striking their spears against the shield-rims.

But—oh joy!—the boats have struck against two of the stone piers of the bridge—say, better, two of the heaps of stones on which the bridge is raised—and burn themselves out harmlessly there. So the Christians now may laugh.

Yet, alas for all these heroic efforts! Heaven itself seemed to fight upon the side of the barbarians. Towards the end of the winter rains (Feb. 6th) [6] the Seine rose so high that a portion of the bridge was suddenly swept away by it, and the tower and its defences were cut off from the island city. It is said that at this moment there were only twelve of the garrison in

[1] L. 249. [2] L. 302. [3] Ll. 303 *sqq.* [4] L. 360.
[5] Ll. 375 *sqq.* [6] Ll. 504 *sqq.*; *cf. Ann. Ved.*

the tower;[1] which was as well, for in any case their capitulation must have been only a matter of time. But these twelve heroes held out to the last, till the Danes succeeded in setting fire to the building, whereupon they sallied forth and were slain to the last man.[2] The Vikings, prevented from reaching the northern bridge, now moved to the south of the town and made their headquarters in the other St. Germain's Abbey, St. Germain des Prés.

But now help seemed to be coming from without. Gozlin had sent message after message to the Cæsar and to Duke Henry, his representative in Germany.[3] At last, towards the end of February, Henry did set himself in motion with an army which he had gathered in Franconia and Saxony. But his Germans suffered much during their march, for heavy rains were still falling. Duke Henry brought no spirit with him to the relief of Paris. He made one night attack upon the Danish camp[4] and then withdrew, having accomplished next to nothing.

For all that, the besiegers made no progress. Their attacks on the southern bridge were no more successful than had been those to the north; so that at last Siegfred consented to come to terms, and agreed to raise the siege on the payment of an 'indemnity' of sixty pounds of silver;[5] a moderate sum indeed compared to the 12,000 pounds which the same Siegfred had received a year ago from the people of Neustria. Matters had been thus arranged when of a sudden Bishop Gozlin died, worn out it may be by his exertions, or killed by the pestilence which had begun to rage in the city.[6] About the same time, too, died Abbot Hugh, who had been long invalided, and West Francia lost her doughtiest champion. The hearts of the Christians sank, and those of the Danes were filled with joy. Truly it seemed as if God Himself were fighting upon the side of the heathen.

[1] Ermenfrid, Eriveus, Erland, Odoacer, Ervic, Arnold, Solius, Gozbert, Uvido, Ardradus, Eimard, Gozwin.

[2] Or were deceived by an offer of their lives; much as was the British garrison of Cawnpore. (l. 559.)

[3] Abbo, Bk. ii. l. 1 *sqq.*

[4] March 27th.

[5] ii. ll. 40–1.

[6] ii. l. 67.

But at all events the lesser Divinities, if I may call them so, of the Christian pantheon, the saints, under whose protection stood Paris and her neighbouring monasteries, these did not desert the sacred city.[1] As at the first attack upon Paris by Ragnar Lodbrog forty long years since, they began once more to put forth their miraculous powers. Many miracles vindicated the holy soil of the monasteries, which the heathen were profaning. When marauders sought to drive some cattle from the fields of St. Germain des Prés the beasts stood as if rooted to the ground, and could not be moved. One Dane who profanely peered into the tomb of St. Germain's father was struck blind; another who tried to enter that of the saint himself fell dead upon the spot—an unseen hand struck him dead. A fourth scaling the high tower of his church was thrown headlong and fell to the earth in the sight of Count Odo and the defenders of the city. And the night after Bishop Gozlin died a *Danish* sentinel (Abbo declares), in the silence of a dark, wet night, saw St. Germain come out of the sepulchre in which the bishop's body had just been placed. Another night a Christian sentinel witnessed a still more cheering sight —the same saint passing round the city walls and sprinkling them with holy water. Miracles or no, or only that best of auguries, men fighting for the defence of their country, the Danes began to grow weary of the siege. Siegfred, we saw, had long been anxious to negotiate, only that the death of Gozlin had inspired the Danes with fresh ardour for their work.

Yet still the more determined of Siegfred's followers would not hear of giving in. Then he led them once more to the attack, which was no more successful than previous ones had been, and mocked at them as they were driven back from the walls: a curious picture of the relations between a Viking leader and Viking troops in those days.[2]

In the summer the pest broke out in the city with terrible

[1] Bk. i. ll. 477 *sqq.*; ii. ll. 85 *sqq.*

[2] Bk. ii. 47 *sqq.* This event is placed before the death of Gozlin; but it more probably succeeded it.

ravages.[1] Count Odo, who was now the commander of the garrison, determined at all hazards to make his way to the emperor and urge upon him the desperate condition in which they all stood.[2] During Odo's absence the command devolved upon Ebolus, the valiant Abbot of St. Germains. Bravely did he organize and lead numerous sorties, harassing the Danes in their camp. The garrison had but two comforting reflections to dwell upon—one that Siegfred had now really given up his command, accepted the offered ransom, and retired with a portion of the army out of France; the second that surely by this time the Cæsar must be marching to their relief. Before long, in truth, the sun lighted up for the besieged the shields of Odo and his troops appearing upon the heights of Montmartre,[3] a pledge of further help. The Danes on their side perceived his approach, and drew up to oppose his re-entry into Paris. But Odo, assisted by a sortie from the city, cut his way through their ranks and returned to his anxious garrison.

In July the emperor held a council at Metz to consider measures for the relief of Paris. Finally he collected an army, and with deliberate steps set out towards the scene of combat. In a month he had got no farther than Laon. Here, or at Quiersey, he sent forward Duke Henry with an advanced guard; in order, no doubt, that on him should fall the brunt of the attack. Wherefore at last the straining eyes of the watchmen on the city walls did see the Imperial banners waving on the horizon, and before long the duke and his army in their turn pitched their tents upon Montmartre. The Danes were now held, or might at any moment be held (so to say), between two fires. But they were not wanting to themselves—and in truth the bull-dog obstinacy with which these Vikings maintained their hold on Paris is as notable, though not as admirable, as the constancy of the defenders of the town. The Danes took measures for guarding their front, by fosses, palisades, by all the arts of war they knew. And as it proved with fatal success.

[1] ii. ll. 154 *sqq.* [2] L. 163.

[3] . . . montis super Odo cæcumina Martis
Enituit. (ll. 196–7).

For the too confident Henry, riding forward to the attack at the head of his troops, came down suddenly into a foss which the Danes had dug in front of their lines and hidden by branches and brushwood, he came floundering down into the ditch and was straightway dispatched by the Danes in the very sight of his own soldiers: whereupon these lost heart and turned back. This was all that came of the second attempt to relieve Paris.

Meantime the emperor himself was delaying and delaying, and letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.' The only good fortune which befell the besieged was the death of Sinrik, the second leader of the Northmen, Siegfred having departed in April last. This Sinrik had vowed (over the Bragi cup, perhaps) that he would fix his camp by the very source of the Seine. What he did accomplish was to make his bed in the stream, being drowned in the river a little above the town.[1] The besiegers, however, were not so discouraged as to be prevented from making another furious attack upon the defences of Paris; and once more arms were clashing, bells ringing, women screaming, monks weeping, monk Abbo among them; such an uproar as Abbo had never heard before.[2] Had it not been for the courage and constancy of their leaders, the garrison must have given way. 'St. Germains himself is brought to the front; he comes to fight upon our side!'[3] In other words, his bones come; the relics being carried round the ramparts to encourage the combatants.

After this a third attempt at relief was made, less ambitious, but more successful than the others.[4] Six hundred Franconians, sent forward by Charles, forced their way into the town from the heights of Montmartre. The garrison on their side made a sortie, and the result was a victory for the Christians, and this welcome addition to the strength of the defence.

Finally,[5] just two months after the Mainz Diet, Charles did at last himself appear with the main body of his army, and

[1] Ll. 220–6. [2] Ll. 227–8. [3] Ll. 279–83.
[4] Ll. 315–329. [5] Ll. 330 *sqq.*

fixed his camp upon the same hill of Montmartre which figures so frequently in the history of this siege. The Danes on their side withdrew to their headquarters upon the south side of the river.

To this extent, then, Paris had been relieved. It is true that in the course of the siege an indemnity had already been paid to one leader of the Danes, and yet only a portion of their forces had withdrawn. It might seem as if the defenders had not gained much by their long agony. But in truth this siege of Paris is not to be compared to any mere raid and plundering expedition—such as were the earlier sieges set on foot in the hope of booty only. This we must look upon as part of a scheme of conquest. From the obstinacy with which the Northmen carried on their operations, it is clear that they attached no small importance to the success of their endeavour. Almost for the first time had they run their heads against one of the new defences set on foot by Charles the Bald, and for the first time for many years had they met with a really determined resistance. It may have been more their pride than their policy which made them obstinate to break down this opposition; but, whether they knew it or not, policy was deeply interested in the issue—the whole *politiké*, the whole civilized state of Western Europe was concerned in it. It is never safe to indulge in speculation as to what would have happened. But it may be said, at any rate, that there seems no reason why, if Paris had fallen at once, the Vikings should not have made themselves the masters of France. Events in this age always seem to hang upon a thread; and therefore it is the more unwise to prophesy how they might have proceeded in different circumstances. One cannot say why the death of Godfred should have saved the fate of Germany, or at least of Germany north of the Main. But so far as we can judge, it was this alone that did so. Nor can we say precisely why the obstinate resistance of Paris saved the fate of France. But if we try to picture what would have happened had Paris made little or no resistance to the invading army, we must own that it seems to have done this.

The Danes were now in their turn besieged behind their lines. No doubt they were greatly reduced in numbers. Easy seemed the task which lay before Charles with his great army—easy, indeed, compared with the efforts which Odo and his garrison had been making throughout the last year. If he dared not attempt to storm the Danish camp; to keep the enemy shut in there till they were starved into surrender; to make every effort meantime to put Paris in a stronger condition of defence than she had been in before; to victual her afresh, to clear, as far as might be, her houses of pestilence;—this was the plain and not difficult duty of the emperor. But now he proceeded, as was his way, to undo as far as possible the good that had been achieved by his lieutenants. A month dawdled on, and nothing was done. Then came the news that Siegfred had returned to the Seine with a new army and a new fleet. Charles was at once panic-struck. He entered into a shameful treaty with the besiegers. If they would leave Paris they should have full permission to pass higher up the river and enter Burgundy.

Burgundy scarcely yet knew their name—

> Nomina tunc ensem quorum perpessa fuisti
> Nunc vocitare prius, pigra O Burgundia bello,
> Neustria præcluibus thalamum nisi comeret altis
> Jam tibi consilio facilis; verum modo jam scis.[1]

In that land might they plunder to their hearts' content. For Burgundy, even Upper Burgundy where the Vikings now went, was little attached to the Carling House. It had been on the point of joining with South Burgundy and Provence in recognizing Boso as its king. It may have been in order to give the Burgundians a lesson that Charles the Fat granted this free passage of the Vikings into their territory. But whatever else he did, he did not rivet their fealty to the Carling House. The next year Northern Burgundy found the opportunity to proclaim herself a separate kingdom, to cut the ties which bound her to Germany, and chose for her ruler Rudolf, a scion of the house of Welf of Altdorf.

[1] Ll. 343–6.

In addition to this disgraceful provision in the treaty with the Vikings, Charles further agreed to pay another ransom: this time of 700 pounds of silver.[1] 'And this,' says a modern historian, 'was the wretched outcome of Charles's expedition for the relief of Paris, the last undertaking of the United Frankish Empire represented by a single individual.[2]

III.

A miserable end indeed, and on all fours with the finale of the expedition which Charles had undertaken against the Danes at the beginning of his sole rule in Germany, the not less disgraceful treaty of Elsloo. It was a lesson to the world how low the Carling race, and with it the Carling Empire, had fallen. But the heroic defence of Paris which had preceded this disgraceful treaty, whose effects even Charles could not quite destroy, was a lesson likewise if men would take it to heart. It was a sign of the recuperating forces of nature which are always at work if we know where to look for them. So soon as Christendom learnt to conform to the new conditions of existence which the unresting stream of time had been shaping out for her, then she would begin to receive the full benefit of the restorative powers which time brought in its course. A single Frankish Empire was now an absurdity, so far apart had drifted in character and language and interests all the nationalities out of which it was composed. It was a source of weakness, not of strength. But the help which Paris, the queen of cities, nay, the whole Western kingdom, had looked for in vain from the successor of Charlemagne, she had found in herself, among her own sons. Though two of France's great heroes, Hugo and Gozlin, had died last year, the workshop of their kind—the *officina heroum*—had not ceased to produce. A.D. 887.

It was as if Robert the Strong, the ancient defender of France, had re-arisen in the person of Odo, much as, according to the old legend, Charlemagne was to rise again some day

[1] L. 339. [2] Dümmler, *Ostfränkische Geschichte*, ii. 273.

in the hour of Germany's supreme peril. On every side the states which had formed but provinces of one great empire were awakening to the fact that they would be happier, better cared for, under the protection of some lesser ruler who was close at hand, than under the shadow of a great imperial name. Thus Arles had already got her king; Upper Burgundy in the next year, 888, was to get hers. In the same year France made a like change of dynasty. When Charles the Fat, from weakness and ill-health which had long troubled him (and afford the only excuse for his inaction), sank one step lower down into something like sheer imbecility, Germany chose herself a king in Arnolf, the brave Duke of Carinthia, Carloman's natural son. But France took the great step of raising to the throne of Paris and the throne of France Odo, the heroic defender of the city, a prince of a new race, no scion, legitimate or illegitimate, of the house of Charlemagne.

A.D. 888.

After the treaty made by Charles with the Danes the siege of Paris virtually reached its termination. However, when they had ravaged for one year in Burgundy, the Northern army again (in the spring of 888) appeared before the city demanding the payment of the stipulated ransom. The Danes were now once more below the city, in their old headquarters of St. Germains des Prés. Ascrich, the new Bishop of Paris, and Count Odo had gone to collect the sum demanded, seven hundred pounds of pure silver. But the Parisians kept good watch against the enemy. Meantime, as appears, Siegfred had again entered France and joined forces with his old comrades, and in the meantime, too, Charles had been dethroned. Anon Odo and Ascrich returned, and the fine was paid. It was paid upon condition that the Vikings should withdraw from the country. Instead they made an attempt to slip once more past the city and attain the region of the Upper Seine. But they were met by Ascrich and the valiant Ebolus, and were beaten back.[1] However, they succeeded in reaching the mouth of the Marne; and up that river they

[1] L. 396.

sailed, ravaging far and wide near the eastern borders of France.[1]

Had Godfred's army been in possession of the territory which it had once nearly won upon the Mosel, the two great hosts of Vikings would have come in contact. For this one wasted the country as far as Toul and Verdun. They wasted round Meaux and Troyes, and as far back again as Rheims. This was the revenge of the Northmen for the twelve months lost over the Paris siege. But they showed that they had taken to heart the lesson of that siege, in that they confined their depredations to the open country, and did not attempt to force their way within the walls of the cities. This change of plan is the first mark of a decline of the wave of conquest, though the amelioration in the condition of the country would scarcely be discernible for some years to come.

IV.

The political events which followed immediately after the siege of Paris were of such supreme importance that they turned men's eyes for a moment away from the Viking difficulties.

The process of disintegration in the empire, which the Northern raids had done their part to hasten, had now reached a crisis. And thus upon this side the Vikings may almost be said to have done their work. True, there are no actual stopping-places in history, and we can never say that any force is really spent. The artificial divisions made by the close of reigns and dynasties often in reality fall in the middle of a new era. It would be hard to say whether this be not true of the close of the Carling dynasty; whether the final disappearance of the Carling House from history is so memorable an epoch as that upon whose threshold we now stand—but do not mean to overstep—the final division of the empire, the final separation of the Eastern and Western kingdoms, and the rise of many new thrones on which sit sovereigns not of Carling blood.

[1] Ll. 430 *sqq.* Ebolus was, it appears, slain at this time.

A.D. 887. These changes, we have said, followed immediately upon the ending of the siege of Paris, and may be reckoned in no small part the outcome of that siege. Charles's conduct in that gave the *coup de grace* to any reverence which he may still have commanded. His incapacity for all the duties of a ruler was too apparent. Statecraft was not hedged round with the network of custom which nowadays impedes a change of government. And so when the forces which kept alive men's conservative instincts once failed, revolution became, as it became just nine centuries later in France, 'the order of the day.'

Our pity cannot in justice be withheld from the unfortunate Charles. He was, for one thing, in wretched health, suffering tortures of headache during the last two years; and this bodily condition may afford the explanation of many of his acts of weakness. He had been epileptic as a young man—as were many members of his house—and been troubled with strange visions: thought at one time, in a fit of remorse after rebelling against his father, that he had Satanas right inside of him, and ran to Lewis to confess and be exorcised. It seems probable that at the present time his brain was softening. By the death of Duke Henry, killed in the trench before Paris, Charles lost his right hand and his trustiest follower. Others in whom he trusted were driven from his side by popular clamour. His wife now deserted him of her own accord and retired into a monastery. And the mental condition of the kaiser was such that the ship of the state seemed to be drifting sailless and rudderless before storms.

At length, in November, while the emperor was at Trebur, where he had been at last induced to summon a diet, Arnolf of Bavaria put himself at the head of an army and marched upon the town. It is likely that this course of action had been pre-arranged, for everybody almost fell away from the king at the first news of Arnolf's approach. 'He was abandoned by all his subjects, who chose Arnolf, son of Carloman, to be king' of Germany. In January of the following year Charles was dead.

And now a way was opened for the action of those centrifugal forces which had long been drawing apart the different nationalities in the empire of Charles the Great. The Latin-speaking races separated themselves at once, and we may say for ever, from the history of Germany. Arnolf—not a legitimate Carling, we remember—was chosen in the latter country only. In Italy the crown alternated between the two rival claimants, both Italians—Berengarius, Count of Friuli, and Wido, Duke of Spoleto. The kingdom of Upper Burgundy came into existence, and fell to the share of Rudolf the Welf, Abbot of St. Maurice. Lower Burgundy and Provence (Boso's kingdom of Arles) were falling into fearful anarchy; for Boso was dead, and his son and successor was a boy. The Vikings plundered his kingdom in the north, the Saracens attacked it from the side of the Mediterranean. A.D. 888.

Finally, France, as we know, rejecting all Arnolf's claims to retain this portion of the dominion of Charles the Fat, chose Odo for her king, the first of the Capetan House. And this choice is of not less importance than the final enthronement of the house under Odo's great-nephew, Hugh Capet himself.

These are the events which make the end of one, and the beginning of a new era in the history of the empire.

For a while chaos seems to descend in its blackness over Western Europe. The annalists leave off writing annals: the ravagings of the Norsemen spread on all sides. But very soon a favourable change sets in in the character of the Viking attacks. We have no internal history of these Northmen—as yet: no clue, therefore, to the arms and policy of their leaders. But we can hardly look upon the great invasion of Germany in 881–2, or the great attack upon Paris in 885–7 as directed in each case by any lesser ambition than that of conquering a country. We must remember that the Danes who bore part in these expeditions were either the same men, or were in close relations with the same men, who had for years been engaged in a great effort to conquer England—an effort which, if it had

not succeeded to the top of their desires, had certainly not altogether failed. We may justifiably look upon the two great undertakings of Godfred and Siegfred in 881 and 885 as pendants to the undertakings of the Great Army in England between 866 and 878. Very different from such vast schemes were the isolated attempts to make settlements in the empire which had long been going on. To these the wisest of the Vikings were in the end to return and to confine themselves for the future. A young Viking, Rolf, who, according to some accounts, was in England during part of the great years of invasion, and who was much more probably in many of the Viking expeditions undertaken between the years 881 and 887 upon the Continent, was destined, by confining his ambition within narrower limits than had done such leaders as Siegfred and Godfred, to create the only permanent northern state within the limits of the ancient Carlovingian Empire. The history of the Danes in Normandy belongs to another stage in the relations of Christendom with the people of the north.

Before we utterly shut the book upon this page of history, let us take one glance over the portion of Europe which has now for just one century been the wide theatre for the achievements of the Vikings, and see what their solid accomplishments have been either in the way of good or evil.

Nay, for one moment let us cast our eyes farther even than the wide area of the Viking invasions, properly so called. For that almost nameless history of the early Scandinavian doings in Russia has passed through its first stage; and there is by this time a well-established dynasty of Swedish princes enthroned in Novgorod. These Russian Northmen are in communication with the Byzantine Court, furnishing the emperors with their famed Varingian guard; at times passing down to the Ægean and carrying on their own piracies on that side of the world. Pass westwards from Gardariki, and we come to the Scandinavian countries proper. These are undergoing a ferment of their own—all tending towards a new era in which the petty kingships in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, are to

be fused into a single rule in each country. This era, too, has begun. Gorm the Old reigns as sole King of Denmark—at least it is believed that his sole reign begins about this time, A.D. 883, just two years before the beginning of the Paris siege, is the date usually assigned to the battle of Hafirsfjörd, whereby Harald crushed his rivals, the petty kings of Norway, and raised himself to be the monarch (not yet, indeed, the universally acknowledged one) of that country. The history of Sweden at this moment is more obscure. But there is no doubt that she followed at a short distance of time the lead of Denmark and of Norway.

Then again the Vikings had ere this founded earldoms in the Orkneys and the Shetlands. They had conquered Caithness and part of Sutherlandshire—nay, more or less imperfectly, all Scotland north of the Grampians. As for the farther islands of the ocean, there was no conquest to be made in them—only the killing or driving forth of a few stray monks, *papas*, or hermits. This process had begun as early as 825, when a Norseman, Grim Kamban, brought a colony of his countrymen into the Faroes. The Norwegian settlement in Iceland dates from 875. And the Icelandic sagas profess—and seem to be able to support the boast—that they give historic accounts of the Icelanders from the first moment of the colonization of the island. So that from their side historic light begins now to shine upon the career of the Northmen; and it touches some of the personages connected with the Viking history of these days.

Ireland: we have long lost sight of Ireland. When we last looked upon it, the history of the Norsemen there was entering upon a new stage. They had obtained as much of a footing in the country as they thought necessary. Then a new Viking nationality, the Danes, after long abandoning that field of labour, had returned there once more, and a momentary lift in the mist, which wraps round the history of the country, showed us the arms of the Vikings no longer turned upon their old victims the Gaedhil, but turned against one another. Then the clouds swept down again. These momentary victories

of the Danes were probably followed by other defeats: for through the chain of Norse 'stations' in the Hebrides and the other Scottish conquests, Ireland was now in much closer relations with Norway than with Denmark, and the stream of Norse invasion was much more continuous than the Danish. Wherefore the next event worth remembering is that Anlaf (Olaf) the White came from Norway and attained the kingship over all the Scandinavians in Ireland, Dubh-Gaill, and Finn-Gaill (Danes and Norsemen) alike, and that the Irish kings themselves paid him tribute.

The connection of this belt of Northern settlements in Ireland and Scotland is illustrated by the intermarriages among the different families who held rule therein. This Olaf of Ireland married the daughter of the Earl of the Hebrides, Ketil Flatnose by name. Ketil was sent by Harald Haarfagr, the new king of Norway, to subdue the Viking settlements in the Hebrides (the Sudreyar), and make these islands into an earldom under the King of Norway. So say the Icelandic sagas. But whether sent by Harald or no, Ketil must have established himself in the Western Islands long before Harald had subdued his rivals at the battle of Hafirsfjörd. The daughter of Ketil Flatnose and wife of Olaf the White was called Aud. After the death of her husband and of her son she went to Iceland and became numbered among the early settlers, the *Mayflower* emigrants so to say, whose descendants formed the aristocracy of that republic. In Iceland her name was well known as Aud the Wise, and something of her parentage and past history is no doubt correctly preserved in the Icelandic sagas.

Thus, as we have seen, a new light begins to steal over the history of the Scandinavians in the West, in Ireland and Scotland, just at the time when the light which came from the Christian chroniclers is growing dimmest, and here, too, we feel we are upon the borders of a new era.

Of the relations of these different Scandinavian States in Ireland and Scotland with each other or with the native kingdoms in either country, something might be told, something

laboriously gathered from stray notices and meagre chronicles. But here, the close of this volume, is not the place to tell it. In the native kingdoms in Ireland no material change had come about after the days when the Northmen settled themselves firmly in their different colonies. In Scotland, on the contrary, great changes came about. The Pictish dynasty came to an end, and, partly by conquest, partly by inheritance, it was succeeded by the dynasty of the Scottish kings of the West, so that Pictland and Scotland became united into one kingdom, under a race of Scottish—that is to say originally of Irish—kings.

The first accession of a Scottish king to the throne of the Picts took place in 844. But the union of the two kingdoms was not finally established until the time at which our history ends (889), when the kingdom took a new name and became the Kingdom of Alban. The power of the kings of Alban never extended to the northern part of the country (Caithness for instance), which we must reckon as a part of the Scandinavian earldom of the Orkneys.

It was probably about the time of the establishment of the Kingdom of Alban that the Orkney earldom became established as a dependency of the Kingdom of Norway under the 'First Earl' Sigurd, brother of Rögnvald Earl of Mæri, one of the companions in arms of Harald Haarfagr, who, according to the Norse tradition, was the father of Rolf of Normandy.

In Ireland the kingship of Olaf the White was followed by that of Ivar (his brother, by what appears), who accompanied the king in many of his raids; but the exact date at which Ivar began to rule alone is not ascertainable. In 870 the plunderings of Ireland ceased. 'Now for a while were the men of Ireland free from plunderings of the strangers, namely, for forty years, that is to say, from Maelsechlain's reign till the year before the death of Flann till the accession of Niall Glundubh (916). Then it was that Ireland again became filled with the ships of the strangers.'

Scotland was not so free. We hear of plunderings by Olaf

and Ivar together, of a plundering by Olaf's son, Thorstein the Red, of plunderings from the Orkney Islands in the north. But the worst brunt of these fell upon the northern half of the country, which can scarcely be reckoned as a part of the new Scottish kingdom, the Kingdom of Alban.

In England again Ælfred still held the reins of government, and no material change took place in the relations of the English and Norsemen, only that the two peoples were to some extent amalgamating, and that the way was being prepared for the subjugation of the Mercian and East Anglian kingdoms under Eadweard the Elder, which was the chief event of Viking history in England during the ensuing century. In Northumbria the fierce Halfdan had died,[1] and had been succeeded by a Christian Dane, who owed his election, it is said, to the miraculous intervention of St. Cuthbert. Here too the vigour of the old Viking spirit was being undermined; while Ælfred checked its more open display. The similarity of the English and Danish characters and the spread of Christianity among the Danes was leading to a fusion of the two peoples.

If we could imagine some passionate adherent of Odin-worship who had looked forward, during the last seventy years, with growing hope to the suppression of Christianity and the establishment of a great confederation of heathen nations in the north of Europe, such an one would have now felt, from causes which he himself could not well explain, those hopes gradually diminishing. And could he have looked over all Europe and noted the course of Viking history in every country, he would have been inclined to date the year 887 or 888 as about the turning-point in these prospects. He would not, I say, have been able to explain to himself why it was so. No more can we; but the fact remains.

[1] There are three different accounts of Halfdan's death—*Ann. Ult.* 876; *Font. Ann.* 874 (Beth=877); *War of Gaedhill*, p. 27; these authorities represent him as killed at the battle of Strangford Lough, A.D. 877. See also Steenstrup, *Normannerne*, ii. 91. Asser says he was killed. Æthelweard, *Flor. Wig*, that he was killed at Wodansfeld in A.D. 911.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CREED OF CHRISTENDOM.

I.

We have brought our study of the first era of Viking conquest to an end. We have done this, not because the wave of Scandinavian conquest had yet reached its height, but because Christendom, as a whole—Christendom considered in its inward as well as in its outward aspects—had now passed through its greatest trial at the hands of the heathens of the north. In many directions more effective Scandinavian conquests succeeded, during the ensuing century, to those already made. Rolf made his settlement in Normandy, and introduced the most permanent Northern element into the state of France. In the century succeeding that, Denmark rose to such a height of power that a Danish king accomplished what the Vikings had never been able to effect—the total subjection of England.

But in none of these cases did the battle between Heathendom and Christendom assume such a momentous shape as during the period with which we have been dealing. The war of nationalities continued, but it was no longer likewise a war of creeds. The Norman dukes became Christians, and not Christians only, but Catholics of the Catholic. And, as was said on a former page, the true measure of the difference

between the conquest of Cnut and the conquests of the Great Army is given when we see the King of Denmark and England kneeling beside the tomb of St. Eadmund, taking the crown from his own head and placing it upon the shrine of the martyr.

In Germany again the great wave of Viking invasion broke when Godfred's army paused at Coblenz. And now a new foe to that country had appeared above the horizon—a foe not less terrible than the Vikings, but of a totally different character; I mean the Magyars. And in the history of Germany the northern nations soon cease to play an important part.

Insensibly the Scandinavian ambition and policy began to take a new direction. It began to form that vast outlying confederacy of northern peoples which stretched in a huge arc *round* the central states of Christendom—from far down the Dnieper upon the one side to the distant islands of the North Atlantic on the other. From a small central district, comprising the most part of Denmark, the Baltic Isles, Southern Sweden, a strip of Southern Norway, grew up this vast enlarged Scandinavia, which consisted of the Scandinavian countries proper, Greater Suithiod in Russia, some settlements upon the southern shore of the Baltic, the Scandinavian states in the north of England, the north of Scotland, the Scottish isles, Man, the three 'kingdoms' in Ireland, the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, a tiny portion of America even. But in spite of its imposing size, this greater Scandinavia lay outside (in every sense) the nations of Christian Europe; only here and there did it come in contact with them.

The rise, therefore, of this greater Scandinavia, and its internal history when it had arisen, are (it seems to me) the proper subjects for a separate study; and may, I hope, be some day the subject of a succeeding volume. In connection therewith—seeing that we should still deem ourselves concerned with the history of Heathendom and Christendom—it would be proper to introduce a distinct study of the mythology of the Eddas. Such has been from the first my plan.

What the first era of Viking conquest had done we know.

It had destroyed the Irish Church; it had reduced the central states of Christendom almost to chaos. To contemporary minds even fears which seem chimerical to us were possible: it might have seemed not impossible that the heathens were about wholly to uproot Christianity in Northern Europe. Such a fear did exist. And it was not fantastic because of any weakness in the arms of the Northmen. The Vikings' weakness lay in their creed. It is needful for us to bear in mind that, while with visible weapons and in outward battle the contest between Heathendom and Christendom resulted altogether in favour of the heathens, there was at the same time an inward battle going on, fought with invisible weapons, between Northern Heathenism and Christianity, which resulted in a victory not less decisive for the latter.

To make our history really complete it would be necessary to trace the steps of this other conflict; but the materials for doing so are wholly denied us.

What alone is not denied us is the opportunity of measuring in some degree the opposing forces. Half the means for doing this we have already supplied. We have gathered together all that seemed most impressive and most likely to be permanent in the old Teutonic religion. It remains to try and gain some notion of the antagonistic belief—the creed of Christendom during the ninth century. For a picture of this last we must not be content alone with our general knowledge of Christianity, not even with our general knowledge of the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. We may take that as the groundwork of our picture. But we must overlay it with some details which are peculiar to the times of which we write, some special aspects of the general creed of Christendom which for this period occupied the most men's thoughts. To gaining at least a hint upon these the present chapter is applied.

We are not, be it understood, concerned either with the formal decrees of councils, or with the abstract speculations of philosophers, not with the visions of the spiritual, nor the fervent aspirations of the pious in themselves: only with the results of all these in so far as they affected men's general

outlook over the world, the natural and supernatural in it with which they came in contact or believed that they came in contact. On an earlier page we said that the 'creed of any age is only the sum of the individual opinions of that age;' and it is with this formula, or something like it, as our guide that we must equip ourselves for our inquiry. What we ask is, What was at this moment the attitude of society or of individuals towards the abstract doctrines of Christendom; towards the supernal powers; towards what were deemed their visible manifestations; towards sacraments, relics, miracles; what their belief in a future state, what the forms in which that belief was expressed? On these matters we ought to get some notion if we could—sufficient at any rate to afford us an idea of the weapons by which Christianity fought against the rival claims of Heathendom.

II.

Yet where are we to look for the manifestations of our Creed of Christendom during the ninth century? Truth to tell, that creed is not merely not uniform over all parts of Europe, but it is throughout compounded of divers elements which seem to have no connection with each other. How are we to sift and classify these parts? How are we to name them? Let us try the process of sifting first; the naming may be left to follow.

Turn first to that city which still claimed to be in a sense the seat of empire—turn first to that turbulent, ungovernable city by the banks of the Tiber, to a population which will not work and is ashamed to beg; unless to beg like a brigand with insolence and threats. To do that it is not ashamed, nor to bribe and be bribed, to steal, to lie, to murder; *hae tibi sunt artes* now, unhappy Rome. Yet so great is the power of names, Rome now lived on proud and useless, in virtue only of its inheritance from the greatness of the past. There is, perhaps, nothing more wonderful in the course of mediæval history than the continuance of this corrupt mass in the very centre of a new society, its unchangeableness, its persistence in decay. Nothing more strange than this sight, nothing more unutterably sad.

Once the noblest of men could write: 'Think each moment steadily, *as a Roman* and a man, to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity and feeling of affection and wisdom and justice;' or again, 'Let the God which is within thee be guardian of a living being, manly and of ripe age and engaged in state affairs, *and a Roman* and a ruler, who has taken his post like a man waiting for the signal which summons him from life, ready to go.' And the spirit which gave utterance to such thoughts was, as it felt, above all else the spirit of a Roman. Now the Roman name and Roman state were in themselves the home and symbol of corruption of all kinds. Yet with this present decay was linked, like a live man to a corpse, the memory and the idea of former greatness.

At the head of the lawless mob of the capital stood the awful personality of the successor of St. Peter, whose office was at once the sport of turbulent factions and the most majestic which the consciences of mankind confessed. It embodied the idea which was the governing one throughout the Middle Ages—the idea of a theocracy. That idea might have, however, been differently realized: it might have been diffused throughout the whole body of the Christian Church and have spoken through her councils. For Germans it might have been embodied in the German hierarchy; for Frenchmen, for the men of the Western Empire, it might have been embodied in the Gallican Church. The *idea* of the theocracy of Christianity was a universal and a popular idea common to high and low; but the exact shape in which this idea was to be shown forth, that I cannot believe was in these days a matter of great popular concern. It was, on the other hand, a matter of the greatest concern to the representatives of the Church in every land—to the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries. The question took the form of a rivalry between the Pope on the one side and the hierarchies of the transalpine countries upon the other. So far as regards what we may call the official Christianity of those days—the Church, I mean, as represented by her chief officers—this question was the most important which agitated men's thoughts.

The question became complicated with another. The Pope, besides being the claimant of supreme autocratic power in ecclesiastical affairs, was the representative of a definite stream of lay policy, the policy which we have already defined as that of Italy for the Italians: Italy for the Italians in the first instance—get rid *first* of all those barbarian invaders who, in successive streams, have overrun our sacred land; but when that is accomplished we have a further ambition which we might call the policy of all Europe for Italy—in other words the restoration to the City of the Tiber of something of her ancient influence. This could only be done in one way: by transferring to the Pope, as Head of the Church, a temporal as well as a spiritual dominion. So much had the love of empire survived the capacity for it among the Romans.

This ambition had one salutary effect. It obliged the Romans to look out for some wearer of the triple crown who should not be too unworthy of his office. And amid all the corruption and faction through which they rose, the popes themselves stood up far superior, for the most part, to their surroundings. This, then, was the environment within which moved Official Christianity during the ninth century, or, for that matter, during many centuries following. We see that it is one aspect of the contest (of which the Viking troubles are another) between the Roman and the Teuton. We have now to see the special developments which this rivalry assumed during the period with which we are dealing.

We may, to begin with, take our stand at one of the most important of ecclesiastical councils, that of Frankfurt, with which the eighth century drew to a close.[1]

The Frankfurt Council assembled, under the presidency of Charlemagne, to discuss, among other matters, the question of image-worship. How the Isaurian Emperor, Leo III., had set himself against the worship of images against all use of images in the service of the Church, needs

A.D. 794.

[1] Mansi xiii. col. 863 *sqq.*, *Concilium Francofordiense*, A.D. 794. See also Gfrörer, *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, book iii. chap. 9.

not be said. No Puritan Cromwell was more zealous in the breaking of images than Leo and his successors of the iconoclastic faction. The spirit which opposed him was the spirit of those peoples in whom the traces of art and the sentiment of art still survived—nay, we may say that the sentiment of idolatry, or call it anthropomorphic polytheism, survived most in them, and found its expression in the worship of images. It was a question between Christian polytheism and the monotheism, the cold monotheism, of Jews and Mohammedans. And in all the classical lands the worshippers of images formed the popular party. It was the most popular section—the most violent and democratic section—of the Eastern Church which stood up and defied the emperor; I mean the monastic body. In Italy the popular voice was on the same side; and the popes, true to their popular instincts, pronounced strongly in favour of the retention of images in churches. Hadrian I. had written to the turbulent and violent Council of Constantinople,[1] approving in advance the decision it was sure to come to in favour of image-worship.

Not so, however, thought the ecclesiastics north of the Alps. How shall we account for this difference? It has been the custom to speak of image-worship as a direct outcome of the barbarian invasions, of the intermixture of barbarian or quasi-savage elements with an older and more civilized Christianity.

Yet if this were the case, how is it that these very barbarians, sitting in council under Charlemagne, emphatically condemned the practice of worshipping images? The Western Emperor and his ecclesiastics (to whom was added, moreover, a contingent of English bishops[2]), though they lent no support to the violent acts of the Emperor of the East, as emphatically condemned the action and the doctrine of the not less

[1] More commonly called the Second Council of Nice, A.D. 787. It was held under Irene, the widow of Leo IV., who took the Catholic side. For the acts of this Council see Mansi, xii. col. 951—end, xiii. col. 1–819.

[2] See *Caroli M. ep. ad Elipandum* in Mansi, xiii. col. 899 *sqq.* It appears that Alcuin wrote a special treatise against image-worship. Sim. Dun. *Gest. Reg. Ang.* quoted by Gfrörer, *o.c.* vol. iii. p. 622.

violent council of Nicæa, in which the Iconoclast party was condemned; and by implication, the letter of Hadrian, in which he had approved the decrees of that council—a council which the Roman Church has ever since, on Hadrian's authority, held to be œcumenical.[1] Thus condemned, at least by implication, Hadrian yet made no remonstrance against the decree of the emperor and his advisers. There are, then, two memorable points connected with the Council of Frankfurt: first the light which it throws upon the relative position of the popes and the Frankish clergy (when supported by the emperor) at the end of the eighth century; secondly, the picture it gives us of the doctrines of the Frankish ecclesiastics on the subject of this Christian polytheism, which was, after all, one of the most important elements in the Christianity of the Middle Ages.

I say of the Frankish ecclesiastics. It is not necessary to assume that the constituents of the Council of Frankfurt gave expression to the popular belief even of their own countries. They were for the most part men of the dominant race. The popular creed was in the hands of the lower clergy, the great majority of whom, at any rate in the western division of the empire, were Roman-Celts, not Teutons. I surmise that images and image-worship appealed very little to the religious instincts of the ecclesiastics of German descent. Tacitus tells us that the heathen Germans did not have idols or images of the gods in their groves; and most of what we know with regard to the Scandinavian creeds tends to confirm this statement.[2]

The more enlightened among the members of the Council of Frankfurt condemned image-worship from the standpoint of a spiritual Christianity: of such number was Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons. But even those who did not rise to such a height condemned it because they were out of sympathy with this particular phase of polytheism. They had no artistic

[1] Gfrörer (p. 574) says that in the days of Pippin, the Pope and the Worshippers of Images entertained a lively fear that the Franks would support Constantine Copronymus.

[2] See *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i. pp. 401–406.

leanings. The fetichistic forms of Christianity—the worship of relics, of bones, of staffs, and wallets, appealed more to them than the worship of images, which were made to represent a personage, and were not as a rule themselves supposed to be possessed of magical powers. Lest we should be tempted to interpret the decrees of the Frankfurt Council in a sense too favourable to the Christianity of the Teutons, we need to remind ourselves of the many examples of the superstitious reverence for relics, of the *exploitation* which the same people carried on of all the holy tombs of Italy, the rifling from them of the relics of the saints, in order to enrich themselves and their own country with those precious amulets.[1]

The Council of Frankfurt was council and diet in one. At it the lay and ecclesiastical vassals of the emperor sat side by side, Charlemagne presiding. A change had been passing over the *personnel* of the greater ecclesiastical vassals since the House of Heristal mounted the throne. Time had been when all ranks of the clergy, high and low, were filled by Roman-Celts. More and more, since the days of St. Arnolf onwards, had Frankish nobles aspired after the higher Church dignities; and now, as we have seen, the upper ranks of the clergy were chiefly Teutons.[2]

The conversion of Germany had recruited the ranks of the Teutonic clergy with a number of men who were in these days the very best of their order. Boniface and his successors were the direct heirs of the Irish monks their forerunners, who

[1] *Cf.* Einhard, *Historia Trans. B.B. Marcellini et Petri* [Peter Martyr], in Migne, t. 104; and ante, p. 393.

[2] Gfrörer, *l.c.* p. 554, by the rough but only available test of a comparison of names, estimates that, while in the first half of the sixth century the bishops in Frankland were, by a large majority, of Roman-Celtic origin, by the seventh century those of Frankish origin were in the same proportion in excess of the Roman-Celts. This is in apparent contradiction with what was said above in Chapter VIII. (p. 194), when speaking of the ecclesiastical influence over Lewis the Pious. But in the first place it may be pleaded, what Gfrörer admits, that probably many of the ecclesiastics who bore German names were of Gaulish origin (Ebbo, for example, who is said to have been of servile origin, and whom, when writing the passage, I had specially in mind); and, again, that the *numbers* of the lower clergy would insensibly influence the politics of the whole ecclesiastical body.

a century earlier had tamed the spirits of the lakes and mountains in Swabia and Switzerland. The change had been from a Celtic to a Saxon race of teachers. The ecclesiastics who now filled the chief offices of the Frankish Church were the most distinguished men of their day. Most of them were Germans. Even in Italy some in the higher orders in the Church were Franks. It would be difficult to find anywhere greater statesmen than Wala of Corbie, Ebbo of Rheims, or his successor Hincmar; men of more accredited piety than Benedict of Aniana, or Theodolf of Orleans; men more enlightened and spiritual than Agobard of Lyons; of greater learning than Hincmar, or than Raban[1] of Mainz; of more zeal and courage than Anscar of Hamburg or his successor Rimbert. Under the guidance and inspiration of these men the transalpine churches grew in strength and confidence.

By the Council of Frankfurt the German ecclesiastics cut themselves off from the barren controversies which were distracting the churches of the East. During all the first half of the ninth century they gained steadily in influence over state affairs. In the time of Charlemagne the bishops sat along with the lay vassals to deliberate on the ordinary affairs of the empire; but on the other hand (as we have seen) the laity took part in deliberations which were purely ecclesiastical. In the days of Lewis the Pious, while the clergy still sat in the diets, the *placita*, questions of creed, matters such as that endless controversy over the single and double nature of Christ, these were decided by the Church alone.

Great was the spiritual power of the Frankish Church, her force of attraction, at the beginning of the ninth century. Charlemagne's method of converting the Saxons was one which has not been often fruitful in great results, though it has been tried often enough. But the attractive forces of Christianity survived even that. The ghosts of the four thousand five

[1] Ebbo, we have said, was very likely a Gaul by descent; Agobard of Lyons was by birth a Spaniard, possibly in blood a Goth; Raban *Magnentius* claimed Roman descent.

hundred prisoners massacred at Verden on the Aller, of the thousands more who had fallen by the side of Widukind or among the ashes of their homesteads, did not rise up and forbid the Saxons from deserting their ancient shrines. They did not prevent the erection, upon the very sites of former battles or in the places sacred to the old creed, of those new strongholds of Christianity, bishoprics and abbeys, which before long were firmly fixed all over the conquered country—at Verden itself, at Seligenstad, at Bremen, at Münster, at Osnaburg, Paderborn, Herford, Hertzfeld, Halberstatt, Hildesheim, Corvey, Hamburg. During Charles's reign, or the next, all these sees and abbeys were founded; and they remained and made converts.

True, there was for some time a party in Saxony which looked back with regret to the old heathen days and days of independence, and hoped at some time to restore them. But on the other hand, among the majority of the Saxon people, great and small, during the ninth century, we should find more piety—as piety was understood in those days—more zeal in making religious endowments, more attachment to Christianity and the Church, than in almost any other part of the empire. No family produced more saints,[1] or raised more churches, and endowed more monasteries,[2] than the great Saxon house from which Liudolf and Cobbo sprang. And it was Saxony which, during this century, gave birth to that great epic poem now known as *Heliand* (The Saviour), the counterpart for Old Saxony to our poems of Cædmon; the longest vernacular religious poem which was produced in Germany for many centuries.

When the German populations had been brought over, there were fresh fields for the proselytizing zeal of the Frankish Church; first among Slavonic nationalities which lay upon her eastern borders, and next among the Scandinavians. As we have partly seen, in the days of Lewis the Pious all hopes seemed to point towards easy and bloodless conversions in these regions also.

[1] *E.g.* St. Hathumod; or Addila and Hathemy, Abbesses of Herford.
[2] Herford was the most important among these; Gandersheim another.

As for the Slavs, many of them had long been Christians. The Bavarian Church first, subsequently missionaries sent directly by the Pope, Nicholas I., had done wonders among them. The Duke of the Pannonian Slavs, under Lewis the German, Pribina by name, sent to Salzburg for missionaries to teach the more ignorant of his people, and himself dedicated numerous churches in his capital, Mosaburg. The Duke of Moravia, on the other hand, always jealous of the Frankish Empire, and all that belonged to it, sent an embassy to Constantinople with requests similar to those made by Pribina; and thus a rivalry of influence was begun between the churches of the west and the east among the Southern Slavs, which has lasted to our days.

In answer to the request of Rastislas two missionaries—two brothers—were despatched, whose names, Constantine [1] and Methodius, are famous for the conversion of Slavonic nationalities. To them the Slavs owe, among other gifts, the existing Slavonic alphabet; which is, it must be confessed, after all, a gift of doubtful advantage. For had the Russians and Poles and other Slavs been compelled to use the Roman alphabet, there can be no doubt that their languages would be better known in Western Europe than they are to-day, and much of the ill-feeling which exists between Slav and Teuton might have given way before a better mutual understanding. The mission of these two brothers in Moravia extends over the years 864–867. Of the contest between Catholic and Orthodox interests following this invasion of a country which formed as yet a part of the Western Church, we need not here speak. Let us note, however, that these conversions of the Slavs were confined to those who inhabited the centre and south of the Slavonic region. The Abodriti on the Baltic coast, like their neighbours the Danes, remained unconverted, and the work of extending Christianity to the Slavonian nationalities on the Baltic was reserved for a later century.

[1] Or Cyril, the name under which he was canonized; whence the alphabet introduced by him is known as the Cyrillian alphabet. *It* was not th first alphabet known to any of the Slav nationalities, but partly an adaptation and improvement of earlier and ruder forms.

III.

It was hardly consistent with the character of human things that the bright prospects which the early years of the ninth century opened out should continue. The proselytizing spirit of the Frankish Church beat vainly against the stubborn indifference of the Northmen. And here, as in all other cases, to fail in making conquests abroad was to lose credit and power at home.

A rival power to that of the Frankish Church had in the meanwhile been growing up beyond the Alps—the power of the popes. The ecclesiastical history of the second portion of the ninth century is the history of the efforts—successful for the most part—which the popes were making, first to deliver themselves from the patronage of the emperors; next to wrest from the Frankish Church half its power, and to bring it into obedience to the Papal See.

Go back once more to the Iconoclastic controversy. The upshot of it and of the action of the popes therein was that the latter withdrew from the condition of dependence upon the Eastern emperors, denied the right of these to put a veto upon their election. Thus they severed (finally, as it proved) the connection between the Eastern and Western Churches. But that obedience which they withdrew from the Eastern Empire they gave to the Western. The popes were not yet strong enough to stand alone. And though the Council of Frankfurt did not support the doctrine of Hadrian on the subject of image-worship, Charlemagne did support the Pope in the action which rose out of the doctrine. Henceforward the election of the Pope had to be confirmed by the Western Emperor.

It could not take place save in the presence of the imperial envoy. At the same time we note that on that great Christmas Day of A.D. 800, when the Western Empire first came into existence, it was the Pope who placed the diadem upon the head of Charles, whereby the Papal See acquired an undefined and shadowy claim to give the final sanction to, or, if need be, the veto upon, the succession of these emperors of the west.

These two claims, the claim of imperial sanction for election to the papacy, the claim of papal sanction for election to the empire—the one definite and legal, the other shadowy indeed, but resting upon the universal theocratic sentiment of the Middle Ages—these we know were the two great questions round which the history of the Church, nay, all mediæval history, were to revolve for many centuries. One triumphed under Otto the Great in Rome, in A.D. 963; the other triumphed under Gregory the Great at Canossa, in A.D. 1077. We have not to speak of this contest as a whole, only of the steps which during the ninth century it made towards ripening.

Lewis the Pious determined more exactly than his predecessors had done the constitution for the election of the popes, and in that constitution the right of imperial veto was most expressly reserved. Nor had it been ever called in question by the popes who were chosen during the earlier years of this reign, by Paschal I., by Eugenius II., or Valentine.[1] But when the rebellion of the sons of Lewis broke out, we have seen how the Pope began to intermeddle in the matter; how the new policy of the Papal See, the policy of setting the King of Italy into opposition to the transalpine emperor and of founding papal independence on the strength of the national feeling, had its dawning. We have seen how successfully the policy was carried on during the reign of Lothair I., who forfeited all power in Italy, and never ventured, after his first attempt at the election of Sergius II., to interfere in the choice of the popes. Then it was that sometimes the corrupt and factious spirit of the Romans broke loose, and brought scandal upon the papal elections.[2] But on the whole the choices were well made. Finally, after the middle of the century, when one and all of the Frankish sovereigns had lost hugely in power and prestige, a great man was raised to the papal chair, under whom it seemed that all the controversies between the popes and the

[1] Albeit the Romans sought to evade the law; *cf.* Gfrörer, *o.c.* p. 728 *sqq.*

[2] The myth of Pope Joan belongs to this period. Even as a myth it has a certain significance.

emperor, or between the rival churches of the west, would be settled in favour of Rome.

One half of that for which the popes had striven, the separation of Italy from the empire, had already been attained before Nicholas I. mounted the papal throne. Long before his retirement, Lothair I. had lost all power in Italy; the next emperor, Lewis II., had none on this side of the Alps. All the energies of Lewis, and they were great, were at the service of the peninsula: they were constantly called into requisition against the foes of his Italian kingdom, most of all against the terrible scourge of the Saracenic invasion. The rival powers of Pope and Emperor were not seldom arrayed against each other; but this emperor could look for no support from beyond the Alps. The Pope need fear the influence of no rival church in his own country supporting the emperor with its ghostly authority, as in the days of the Frankfurt Council long ago. But Nicholas was not content with this immunity at home; he desired to carry the victory into other countries—above all, to make the supreme authority of the popes felt and acknowledged by the transalpine churches. The means by which he carried out his purpose opened a new era in ecclesiastical history.

Had the Frankish Church remained as much one body as it was in the days of Charlemagne, and held its own head as high great difficulties would have lain in Nicholas's path. The proud ecclesiastics of the conquering German race were not likely to submit without a struggle to the dictation of a Roman.

As might be guessed, after the breaking out of the civil war, the Church of Francia did not retain the same high position that it held before. The part which many of the Frankish ecclesiastics took against Lewis the Pious was the first act which lowered the estimation of their order: and though the Pope of those days shared in their action, it was left to them to bear the chief part in the disgrace of it. Whatever justification might be discoverable for the course they took, the sight of the penitent dethroned monarch struck a

chord of popular sympathy, and the *vox populi* condemned one and all of his persecutors, Agobard and Wala as much as Lothair or Matfrid.

The Viking raids in their turn, by impoverishing the Church, by shaking men's faith in the supernatural powers, worked in the same direction. During the civil wars, moreover, ecclesiastics who mixed themselves up in state affairs were deprived of their sees or abbeys with as little scruple as the lay vassals were deprived of their fiefs. More and more the practice obtained of granting to laymen the revenues of religious foundations,[1] or creating the order of lay abbots such as Robert the Strong, or Hukbert of St. Maurice, or Hugo of Tours—a practice always execrated by the clergy, whose visionaries had seen Charles Martel, the champion of Christendom against the Moors, burning in hell for a no worse offence; but a practice put in use even by the pious Lewis himself, and viewed with more and more indifference by the people, the more they felt a debt of gratitude to the champions who were their best defence against the Northmen.

In these circumstances certain zealous churchmen—precisely who will never be known—hit upon a device for, as they thought, refortifying the threatened power and influence of their Church. The device was a simple one; merely the forgery, and then the supposed discovery of a series of decretals (decrees) of the earliest popes—decrees professedly dating back much farther than any of the authentic decrees hitherto known.

A.D. circ. 836–840.

The Church did already possess a collection of authentic decretals, known as the collection of Dionysius. But this began no earlier than the beginning of the fifth century. There was also a collection of the decrees of councils known as the collection of Isidore of Seville. Among these, one (a decree of the council of Sardica) was to the effect that the personal decrees of the early popes—judgments pronounced in their

[1] At the same time that the Vikings were relieving the monasteries of their *personalty*, the monarchs all over Western Christendom were in this wise relieving them of their *realty*.

letters—were to be considered binding upon the Church—the *decretals* of the early popes equal to the *decrees* of councils. But the decretals of the earliest popes—where were they? They had never yet been discovered. It seemed a happy thought of some among the ecclesiastics of Mainz or Rheims, or wheresoever the forgeries came from,[1] to make up the missing documents, or a sufficient collection of them. They fathered them upon the same Isidore of Seville, who had handed down the decrees of the early councils; and the collection which they published, and which is famous in the ecclesiastical history of these days, is known as that of the 'False Decretals,' or the 'Decretals of the Pseudo-Isidore.'

This spurious collection professed to contain among other things the original deed of the famous donation of Constantine to Pope Silvester, in which began the temporal power of the popes, and which, in the view of the wisest of Catholics, had wrought such evil in the Church :—

> Fatto v'avete Dio d'oro e d'argento :
> E che altro è da voi agl' idolatre,
> Se non ch'egli uno, e voi n'orate cento?
> Ahi ! Costantin, di quanto mal fu madre
> Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote,
> Che da te prese il primo ricco padre.

It was scarcely in the power of the forgers, having made this appeal to antiquity, to rest it upon any other basis than the papal power. The object of the new decretals was to free the Church, wherever found, from the control of the laity: to all this the forged decrees tended. But it could not reserve this power to any one Church at that moment existing. Where in the fourth century and earlier had been the Church of the Franks, whose great ecclesiastics now formed a powerful barbarian phalanx round the imperial throne?[2] Beside, these forgers were not themselves members of this greater hierarchy.

[1] There can be little doubt that the False Decretals proceeded *either* from Mainz or Rheims. Gfrörer (*l.c.* p. 790) pronounces for the former, Dümmler (*Ostf. Reich.* i. 222) for the latter.

[2] I include in the expression 'imperial throne' that power which, after A.D. 843, the sons of Lewis the Pious affected to wield conjointly.

They were not eager to secure the pre-eminence of the metropolitan archbishop who ranked with the greatest vassals of the empire, and who lorded it over the lesser bishops. Add the eternal influence of the feeling *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, the tendency of men to avoid the evils which they know, and fly to others which they know not of, and we have the explanation of the fact, strange at first sight, that the effect of this piece of Frankish or German workmanship was enormously to augment the power of the Pope, and therefore of the Ultramontane Church. Some of the supposititious decrees directly asserted, and all of them implied, a right of appeal for any bishop from his metropolitan to the Pope.

But these were not the provisions of the False Decretals which were first noticed and put into use. All manner of questions, moral as well as ecclesiastical, were treated in them; and the burning question of the day, the alienation of Church benefices, was not left out. No student of Church history in the present day could be deceived by these forgeries, unless he were wilfully blind. It is difficult to believe that the more learned ecclesiastics of that day did not detect the fraud. But it fell in so pat with their wishes, just at the time when they were sharpening all their weapons for an attack upon the lay vassals small and great. Here were decrees against the alienation of Church lands as fitting as if they had been written in the ninth century (which they were) instead of the second or third. Here was a protecting power for the cloth against the violence of the laity. The awful power of St. Peter and his keys, an appeal to which men had before only thought of as a vague possibility, now took visible presence in their imaginations.

Thus it fell out that one after another the great ecclesiastics (who ought to have known, who *did* know, better) accepted and used the spurious decrees. Hincmar hailed them with delight. Before long he was hoist with his own petard. Up to A.D. 861 he had been upon the side of the Pope. They both championed the cause of Lothair's injured wife, Thietberga, in the Lotharingian divorce question. But in A.D. 861 Hincmar deposed one of his suffragans,

A.D. 861-865.

Bishop Rothad of Soissons. Next year Rothad brought his case to Rome and appealed to the Pope. In that Nicholas really knew nothing of the rights or wrongs of the obstinate old man, he might, without loss of dignity, have easily and probably justly confirmed the decision of Hincmar; and, without measuring swords with the greatest Frankish ecclesiastic, might still have established a precedent for the right of appeal. But Nicholas knew not fear, and he despised compromise. What if he were at this moment at war with the Patriarch of Constantinople and with the Church of Lotharingia? Here was an opportunity of forcing his yoke on the neck of the greatest and proudest prelate of the day. Hincmar stood above all the other metropolitans of Francia. He had obtained certain ceremonial privileges for his archbishopric of Rheims which seemed to place his See almost on a level with the chair of Peter. Wherefore Nicholas at once took up the cause of Rothad. It seems to have been just at the time of the Bishop of Soisson's appeal that the false decretals first came into the hands of the Pope: possibly Rothad himself brought them. They furnished him with a crushing weapon against his adversary. Hincmar now sought to question their genuineness. But it was too late, for he had already made use of them to further purposes of his own. And though the battle was long, to the Pope fell the victory in the end. He despatched a legate into France, who compelled the reluctant submission of Hincmar and reinstated Rothad in his bishopric.[1]

IV.

In the meantime arose that great divorce case of Lothair II. and Thietberga to which we have often made reference.[2] The case stood thus. Lothair the Elder, though he ended his life in a monastery, had not shown himself in the years of his reign

[1] The controversy can be followed in Migne t. 119, cols. 821–39, 860–3, 871, 890–911, 1094–1114.

[2] Nicholas I.'s briefs, &c., on the case of Lothair and Thietberga in Migne t. 119, cols. 796–803, 869–70, 881, 915–25, 971, 1136–51, 1161–80.

a great upholder of Christian morals. He had permitted his sons to take to themselves mistresses and live with them openly. The eldest son, Lothair (II.), had in this manner connected himself with Waldrada, a lady of birth. He contended afterwards that not his father only, but his mother, had sanctioned the connection, with the express object of restraining him from vice, and that by his mother's wish the connection had been made lawful by marriage. To affirm so much was to confess to bigamy; for after Lothair came to the throne he married Thietberga, a lady with powerful connections. Her eldest brother was Hukbert, the lay abbot of St. Maurice in the Alps. Lothair alleged that he had been forced into the marriage with Thietberga by her brothers. He also, when still harder pressed for reasons for a divorce, trumped up a story of her having before her marriage committed incest with her brother.

In fact, Lothair had no child by her. But he had a son and a daughter by Waldrada—the son, that Hugo of Lorraine whose rebellion and death we narrated in a previous chapter; the daughter, Gisla or Gisella, who married Godfred the Dane. The reason of Lothair's strenuous endeavours to gain a divorce from Thietberga and licence to marry Waldrada may be supposed to lie chiefly in his desire to legitimize his children. Whatever the merits of the case might have been, there can be no question that in earlier days a demand like that of Lothair's would have been granted. That the marriage with Thietberga had been barren—that alone would in earlier days have been ground sufficient for its dissolution. No Pope, a few of the Frankish clergy only, had protested against Charlemagne's action in divorcing the Lombard Princess Desiderata, which was defended upon no better plea. But the severe life of Lewis the Pious had changed men's and priests' views on moral questions. Nicholas I. found in the scandal of Lothair's proceedings a golden opportunity for humiliating one section of the clergy and one of the sovereigns of the Frankish empire. And he was so clearly in the right, the corrupt Lotharingian prelates, Günther of Cologne, Thietgaud of

Trèves, were so clearly in the wrong, that the best of the Frankish clergy on every side supported the acts of Nicholas. Hincmar, who would have given much for a good excuse for humiliating the Pope, yet went with him to the end in this matter.

In this case of the Thietberga divorce Nicholas came into direct collision with the ecclesiastics of Lothair's kingdom assembled in council. Lothair had not acted without the sanction of his clergy. In two successive synods assembled at Aix, in 860 and 862, the king had obtained first a separation and then a formal divorce from Thietberga, in virtue of a confession (wrung from her, it may be supposed, by threats) of incestuous intercourse with her own brother previously to her marriage with Lothair. But after this decree the queen made an appeal to the Pope, revoking her former confession, which she declared to have been forced from her under fear of death. Even before Nicholas had mingled in the matter, Hincmar of Rheims had denounced the unjust judgment of the synod. In 863 Nicholas dispatched legates to inquire into the cause. A.D. 860, 862.

The representatives were not well chosen: one Rhadwald had already been sent to Constantinople upon a matter of much greater moment than Lothair's marriage question, which, however, must not concern us here. He had been gained over by one party, and had reported contrary to justice and evidence. Lothair, in the meantime, considering the question settled by the decree of the Aix synod, was about to celebrate his marriage with Waldrada. Nicholas threatened him with excommunication if he did not wait for the papal decree. Thus the gauntlet was thrown down by the Pope: the cause which the Aix synod had decided, the Pope decreed was to be re-heard in the presence of his legates. Still, we observe, he had not yet summoned the case for hearing at Rome. Up to this point the Lotharingian Church gave way. A fresh synod was summoned at Metz; the papal legates were bought over, and the judgment of the synod of Aix was confirmed. A.D. 863.

One might almost imagine that Nicholas purposely chose these compliant legates, so well did their conduct (as it proved) subserve his nearest desires. No doubt he was kept well informed by Hincmar, by the numerous adherents of the Thietberga party, of the brief (if I may use the word) for the defence. Finally, he decided to re-hear and re-judge the case himself, and to reverse, if there should prove to be need, the decisions of the two Frankish councils. He did not, however, proceed quite openly to his designs. Günther and Thietgaud had been despatched to convey to Nicholas the decree of the synod of Metz. They arrived at Rome and were well received.

Oct., A.D. 863. But in three weeks they were summoned to attend a council at the Lateran. There the Pope made known the results of his inquiries into the conduct of his legates and into the decrees of the Metz synod. And terrible was that judgment, which fell like a thunderbolt upon the two archbishops, upon the papal legates, upon Lothair and the Lotharingian Church.

The synod of Metz should not be called a synod, but, like the robber council at Ephesus, be anathema for all time, a brothel, not a council of the Church. Günther and Thietgaud were excommunicated. This was the second great victory gained by the papal chair, second in importance only to those victories gained over Hincmar and the other Gallican bishops upon the question of appeals to Rome. These form the two great events in the history of what I have called the Official Christianity of those days, of what would be called in a more pretentious way the history of the Church.

And it was the better for the prestige of St. Peter that the course which Nicholas had taken seemed to receive a posthumous justification by a direct judgment of the Almighty. Lothair, though he pretended to bow to the papal decree never lost the hope of reversing it; and his hopes revived when the greatest of the popes since Gregory the Great, and, perhaps (if we may use the Miltonic phrase), the greatest of his successors till Gregory VII., was laid in his tomb. Nicholas I. died in 867, occupied to the very last with this

great cause.[1] His successor, Hadrian II., seemed less severe.[2] He took off the sentence of excommunication from the Bishops of Cologne and Trèves. In truth, the Pope could not but wish to stand well with Lewis the Emperor, who was at this moment putting forth all his might against the Saracen; and Lewis espoused the cause of his brother. Buoyed up by his new hopes, Lothair in 869 determined to make a journey to Italy to solicit the warmer support of his brother, and try what their united influence might effect with the new Pope. Lewis was at that moment pre-occupied with his siege of Bari, and would have had Lothair stay at home, but when his brother came, did not refuse his help. Hadrian was invited to meet the two brothers—the emperor and the king—at Monte Cassino. Here every effort was made to bring about a reconciliation between Lothair and the successor of St. Peter. Hadrian did not refuse to meet the King of Lotharingia, but he required an assurance, which was given boldly and impudently by Lothair, that he had held no sort of intercourse with Waldrada since her excommunication. Lothair's courtiers affirmed the same. The next day, which was Sunday, Hadrian himself intoned the service of the mass, and with his own hands administered the elements to the two sovereigns and their court. But when Lothair approached the altar he admonished him once more, using the awful words of this service, that if his conscience was free (as he had declared) from the sin of intercourse with Waldrada, then he might draw near and receive the sacrament to his comfort and to the remission of his sins; but if his conscience was not pure, let him not dare to approach that holy table, lest he should eat and drink his own damnation. The courtiers, too, were required to swear that they had not aided nor abetted the king in sin, nor held any communication with the excommunicated Waldrada. All received the sacrament without hesitation; and after some weeks of further negotiation Lothair turned

A.D. 869.

[1] *Cf.* Migne, 119, col. 1180.

[2] In fact, the ecclesiastics of France and Germany were so afraid lest he should go back upon the decrees of his predecessor that they addressed letters urging him to remain firm (*Vita Hadriani*, § 15).

homeward full of hopes for the attainment of his wishes, seeing that Hadrian had already relieved Waldrada of the sentence of excommunication which Nicholas passed on her.

On his return journey the king had got as far as Lucca. But there he was suddenly struck down by the fever; his courtiers, too, were caught by the same malady, those who had taken the false oath at Monte Cassino, and were dying by his side. One may guess with what a thrill of horror all men, all Europe, witnessed this spectacle of heavenly vengeance. Lothair continued his journey, ill as he was, and he arrived at Piacenza on the 6th of August, which was a Sunday—the last he would ever see. Here might he listen to the bells summoning men and women to prayers, but summoning him —oh! whither? The beliefs of those days, Lothair's own beliefs probably, would leave no doubt of the answer. On that day the king took a sudden turn for the worse, could not be carried further, lost the power of speech. In this condition he lingered on for a day, and died on the 8th of August, 689.[1]

V.

But, after all, the controversies which we have sketched above are interesting to us—for what? For the degree chiefly in which they affected, or illustrated, the current popular beliefs, the *unofficial* Christianity of this century. Those disputes over the power of Peter's chair, those awful sentences of excommunication—what did they really mean? Surely not an antiquarian question only, as to how far the Popes might reckon themselves the direct representatives of St. Peter. Such a question might be interesting in settling a title to succession, and the distribution of rival powers; but it could not concern the mass of the Christian population of Europe, in their homes and their camps, and at their markets. For the generality of readers, for the generality of historians unhappily, controversies like these have degenerated into arid antiquarian disputes, such as in our days would not be worth tracing. To

[1] Regino, s.a. 869, gives a tolerably full account of these events (Pertz, i. 580–1).

vivify them once more we need to make a supreme effort of imagination, to put ourselves back, I will not say into, but upon the edge of, in the penumbra of, the religious atmosphere of those days. We have to try and understand that system of (what shall I call it?) superlative magic on which rested one great portion of the religious feeling of that age, the fundamental creed of Catholicism. I mean the Catholic sacramental doctrine with all its appurtenances. We try to realize it; many people profess to believe it still as firmly as ever. But the truth is, neither we nor they can ever, after the revolution of so many centuries, grasp more than its shell, stand nearer than within the outer shadow of that belief.

'The unworthiness of the priest hindereth not the efficacy of the sacrament'[1]—a phrase often enough repeated in these days, and approved as containing a fine philosophical truth at the bottom of it. But what was its meaning to ears in those days? The 'efficacy of the sacrament'—what was that? It was the last, the supreme magic rite of Christendom. By it who knows what powers of darkness might be driven away or disarmed? Who knows what souls might be saved by a mere incantation beside a baptismal font or by a portion of bread or of wine, by an unction poured over a dying man? That power which a Günther or a Thietgaud might hold, was not hindered by his unworthiness. While he held his office he held the conduit as it were of a mysterious and supernatural effluence, immeasurable, unmeasured. By regular course the stream of influence descended in narrowing conduits through all the hierarchy, good and bad, from the metropolitan to the lowest priest. The unworthiness of the priest, I say, could not hinder this; but on the other hand (and the corollary must ever be borne in mind) the worthiness of the priest could not forward it. He had no power to create a fresh supply or to divert the stream into fresh channels. Such a creed is no doubt still half believed in by

[1] This doctrine is especially insisted on in the work of Paschasius Radbertus, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (A.D. 844), one of the most important theological works of the century (see next note). *Cf.* especially chh. xii., xv. (Migne, t. 120, col. 1310, &c.).

thousands, and has become in a shadowy way a commonplace of religion. But who shall revivify it so as to show us the form it took in the ninth century? 'It is simply the doctrine of the Catholic Church.' But I am not concerned with a 'doctrine.' I want to get to a vital belief.[1]

A tremendous 'doctrine;' still more tremendous as a vital creed. Superlative magic—I do not think one can find any other name which expresses it so well. Like all magic, properly so called, this obeys material laws. Spiritual insight will give no clue as to its action. An unseen, immaterial-material stream flowing through certain agencies, transmitted by mechanical means. Without it (so men deem) none of the spiritual life of Christianity can be kept alive; without it the heavens themselves become darkened to you. Yet you yourself have no control over this stream, nor has he who passes it on to you; the unworthiness of the vessel does not hinder, the worthiness does not forward.

Most people make no inquiry into the ultimate sources of their beliefs. 'The world rests upon an elephant, the elephant upon a tortoise—on what does the tortoise rest?' 'We have no valid evidence of the reality of our sensations; we have no valid evidence of the reality of our ideas. What, then, are the ultimate truths?' These are the kind of questions which few people ask. But everybody is dependent more or less upon those who have asked them, and upon the answers they have found. I guess in the same way that few among the two or three millions of Christians in Western Europe in those days asked, 'What is the ultimate source, the reservoir of

[1] I take it that of the two great sacraments of the Church, baptism was reckoned by far the most important in the palmy days of conversion to Christ, and that the Eucharistic sacrament now began to equal or outweigh it in importance. Gfrörer says, 'Till the middle of the ninth century there reigned in the Church no fixed opinion touching the sacrament of the altar. Some spoke of a change in the elements; some understood this in a spiritual sense.' It was the treatise of Radbert, above spoken of, and another, of an opposite tendency, attributed to John Scotus, which at just this period helped to bring into prominence the question of Transubstantiation. The views of Radbert triumphed; Scotus was almost universally condemned. *Cf.* Gfrörer, *o.c.* ch. ii., and *Untersuchung über Alter, Urspr., &c., des fälschen Isidors*, p. 129 *sqq.*

this magic stream which flows through Christianity?' 'Who' —to put the question concretely—'who can deprive this Günther of his power over the conduit which he holds?' And yet every one of those millions was dependent upon the answer given to the question. Now, therefore, we see how these controversies over the power of synods, over the rights of Peter's chair, were vital even to the popular religion of those days. For it was the control of this magic life-blood of the Church that was called in question.

One cannot say that the difficulty was ever fully solved, any more than those metaphysical questions which have vexed mankind since mankind first began to speculate. Still, it is necessary that some sort of answer to them should be forthcoming. Undoubtedly in the case of such a belief as we have been describing it was of advantage that the source of the magic power should be as remote as possible. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, as we have said. A man knew his metropolitan too well; but if behind and over the metropolitan stood the dim and awful figure of the Pope, that would tend to reassure men as to the clearness of the ultimate source. And it was probably better for the piety of pious Germans and Frenchmen if they did not (like Luther) ever make the journey to Rome.

I have designedly sought to speak of this mystic sacramental influence as a *stream* flowing out from Rome over all Christendom. For at the beginning, if the reader remembers, we spoke in like fashion of the stream of civilizing influence which flowed out from pagan Rome to the various quarters of her empire. And the later influence is in some degree the antithesis of the earlier.

We are discussing, not the doctrines of mediæval Christianity in the abstract, but those doctrines which came face to face with northern heathendom. While it conquered in arms, they conquered it in spirit. All the more awful seemed this mystic power, the more distant its source, the greater the ramification of members, as through some highly constituted organism, through which it flowed.

Can we doubt that the Northmen had inherited from their

fathers wonderful legends of the power, the magical power, of pagan Rome; of that immense ramification of it through all the civilized world, the visible symbol of which for us, we settled long ago, should be the Roman roads? But to know in what form the belief in the magic powers of the Church would reach the minds of the Vikings, we must translate that belief into its popular forms. We must imagine it enforced by a thousand appeals to the senses, through all those æsthetic channels whose creation has been among the greatest gifts of mediæval Catholicism to the world.

VI.

To this same century, or to the beginning of the tenth, belong two magic formulæ, which are certainly an echo of Old German heathenism—the last echo which *German* heathenism, as distinguished from the Norse, was to leave in the world. These two fragments are known as the Merseburg incantations. They have come down to us in a tenth-century manuscript, probably from the hand of a monk of Fulda.

Fulda stood so deep in the recesses of Old Germany, among those Taunus mountains which we once spoke of as the bulwark of ancient heathendom, so near the other historic forests—the Teutoberger Wald, the Hercynian Forest—that here was the place for the peasant monks to find among their brother peasants still lingering traces of the old beliefs. It is recorded that in Charlemagne's time many old heathen songs were collected by the monks and sung in the monasteries of Germany. We sigh over the little they collected, the less still that has been handed down to us. Yet what business had they with these relics of 'devil-worship'? The practice had to be forbidden in the capitularies of Charlemagne. These are the two formulæ; strange are they—nay, inexplicable—in our eyes:—

FIRST MERSEBURG FORMULA.[1]

For loosening the bonds of a prisoner.

Eiris sâzun idisi sâzun hera duoder.
Suma hapt hepidun, suma heri lezidun,

[1] From Mullenhoft and Scherer, *Deut. Poesie u. Prosa*, p. 9.

Suma clûbodun	umbi cuniouuidi :
Insprinc haptbandun,	invar vîgandun !
Einst sassan Jung frauen ;	setzen sich hierhin und dorthin.
Einige hefteten Bände	einige hemmten das Heer,
Einige pflückteten,	noch Kniefesseln herum :
Entspring den Heftbanden,	entfahre den Feinden !

SECOND FORMULA.

For curing a lame horse.

Phol ende Uuodan	vuorun zi holza.
Dû uuart demo Baldares volon	sin vuoz birenkit.
Thû biguolen Sinthgunt,	Sunna erâ suister,
Thû beguolen Volla,	Frija erâ suister :
Thu beguolen Uuodan,	so hê uuola couda.
Sôsa bênrenkî,	sôse bluotrenkî,
Sôse lidirenkî.	
Bên zi bena,	bluot zi bluoda,
Lid zi geliden,	sose gelîmida sin.
Phol und Wodan	fuhren zu Holze ;
Da ward Baldares Fohlen	sein Fuss verrenkt.
Da besprach ihn Singunda,	Sonne ihre Schwester,
Da besprach ihn Folla	Frija ihre Schwester :
Da besprach ihn Wodan	der es wohl versteht.[1]
So die Beinrenkung,	so die Blutrenkung,
So die Gliedrenkung.	
Bein zu Bein,	Blut zu Blut,
Glied zu Gliede,	so als ob se geleimt waren.

Such fragments as these are almost worthless in themselves; but as memorials or symbols of the contact between Christendom and heathendom, they deserve a place here. For it so happens that to this century also belong the earliest *vernacular* Christian poems of Germany. One, a tolerably long one, is known to modern students as *Heliand* (Heiland), the Saviour; this is a Low German (Saxon) poem. The other is in High German (Bavarian), and was in fact dedicated to Lewis the German. It is a mere fragment; we might call it a semi-Christian poem, for it is partly mythological. It is known by the name of *Muspilli*. The fragment which has come down to us gives an account of the end of the world. Do not, therefore, Christendom and heathendom seem to meet in Germany at this moment as at no other?

[1] *Cf.* chap. II. sec. v.

Though, we have said, Charles the Great directed capitularies against the practice of preserving ancient poems and fragments of heathenism (rather inconsistently with his own habit of collecting all the heroic lays of heathen Germany), I surmise that the ancient popular beliefs were not looked at so much askance then as they came to be a century or two later, when they had merged in 'witchcraft.' Even in the bloody 'Saxon capitularies' of Charles, wherein the death penalty is enacted against all who so much as hide themselves to escape baptism, we notice that the practice of some old heathen sacrifices are only punished by fine, not by death—a certain testimony to the tenacity of popular belief.[1]

It was not till a century or two later—the eleventh or twelfth—that the ancient beliefs of Germany had been transformed into those dark and awful superstitions which, in the eyes of Christians, took the form of the blackest magic and necromancy. That was, in truth, a necromancy, and of a peculiarly impressive kind—the summoning from its tomb of a buried creed. At present popular superstition and Christian belief lived on better terms. Christians and heathens alike lived on the borderland of mythology. No sooner was a great man dead, than myth took possession of him and transformed him. Charlemagne, for example: no sooner was he gathered to his fathers than there began to spring up the Carling myth, which went on growing for centuries. Charlemagne's mother, Queen Bertha: we know the story which grew up about her—of the persecutions she endured from her suspicious husband, comparable to the sufferings of the patient Griselda. Queen Bertha's age passed into the ideal of a golden age—*il buon tempo quando Berta filava*, 'the good old days when Bertha span.' And yet it was not really she who was the heroine of that picture, but another Bertha, Berchta, Perchta, the old heathen German goddess, of whom we spoke long ago—the spinner, the goddess of the household, the goddess of the *hearth*, and

[1] *Capitulare Paderbrunnense*, No. 21. Si quis ad fontes aut arbores vel lucos votum fecerit, aut aliquit [*sic*] more gentilium obtulerit, et ad honorem dæmonum commederet [*sic*]; si nobilis fuerit solidos sexaginta; si ingenuus [friling] triginta; si litus quindecim. *Leges* i. 49.

not less a goddess of the *earth*[1] and of all nature; such as was old Goddess Nerthus, who was perhaps identical with her. When snow fell, it was (or is) in German popular belief the feathers which Queen Berchta shakes down as she makes her bed.[2]

I believe in like manner that many things related of the mythic Charlemagne, many features in the likeness which men drew of him in after-years, were inherited from the old King of Gods, the All-father, father of gods and men—the very Woden of the incantation just cited, of whom we spoke at length in an earlier chapter. He should be by rights the husband of the great Goddess Berchta. In this manner mythology —the lost mythology of the Old Germans—always, as I think, stood behind the recognized creed of even the Christian Teutons, ready to obtrude itself or to filch away unseen a belief or a fancy here and there from history or from the Christian faith. It is, we know, a lost mythology; we can only guess at some of its features by the aid of that kindred mythology which still informed the beliefs of the Scandinavians.

I suppose that the development of both forms of popular mythology—the mythology which grew out of the sacramental doctrine, which clustered round the holy elements, holy water, holy oil, relics, shrines, talismans of many kinds; and that other heathen mythology which time converted into dæmonology and witchcraft, legends of the Wild Huntsman, and all the legion of fiends and goblins who haunted the imagination of men in the Middle Ages—was due in a large measure to this mingling of Christianity and heathenism. The elements of all these beliefs are primeval. There never was a time and there never was a people which has not believed in talismans and *viatica*, nor in fiends and witches. It was the vividness of this belief which made the characteristic of mediæval Christianity. The ancient creed of Germany laid

[1] Hearth, Earth, Herde, Erde—the one in a certain sense the image of the other.

[2] See Wuttke, *Deutsch. Volksabergl.*, s.v. *Perchta*; Grim. *D. M.*, s.v. Berhta.

the foundation of that overpowering sense of the narrowness of the known world and the vast regions of the unknown which became the prevailing note of mediæval Christianity, and which people mean, but very inadequately express, when they talk of the 'superstition of the Middle Ages.' It is the antithesis of the spirit of the Renaissance, at the dawn of which the world seemed to grow light again, and the giants of the fog and mist retreated once more to the outward regions of earth. In the gloomy aisles of the Gothic cathedral; in the wind-like voice of the organ; in the unmeasured belief in and dread of witchcraft, we have echoes nearer, or more remote, of the creed of the ancient German. We have it, too, in the picture of the mediæval devil, grotesque yet terrible, and of the witches' Sabbath on the Brocken.

For the present these forces were working beneath the surface. We have to pass on a century or two before we realize their full effect, an effect brought to light when mediæval Catholicism has at once absorbed the most of and grown most repugnant to the heathenism of ancient days. It is among the paradoxes in the history of thought, that contradictions like these are so common. The ascetic monk, or his intellectual offspring, becomes the most rigid Protestant; he burns what he has adored and adores what he has burned; he, above all men, ridicules the superstition of the Catholics; but he imports his own dark and superstitious character into his new creed, and out of his 'Predestination and Election to Life,' uprises a fetichism as degrading as any which he had abandoned.

So it was with the descendants of those Vikings who were at this moment bringing havoc among the monasteries of France, of whom peace was soon to be purchased at the cost of a great cession of territory in Neustria. These descendants, the Normans, became the patrons of mediæval Catholicism and of all that political and social fabric, on which it rested for support. Not themselves great in art, not original in their beliefs, they were great in government, in employing the intellect of others to frame the elements of

a life to which they imparted their own rigid and gloomy character—

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.

They used the best genius of France and created the Norman architecture. They used their own matchless genius for command to change France and England; they were the feudalists of feudalism, the pioneers of the Crusades, and the Puritans of mediæval Christianity. Other influences assisted. Christianity grew near to its millennium; that time it was confidently said had been fixed for the limit of the reign of the Church militant, the beginning of the reign of the Church Triumphant, the second coming of Christ to judge the world. And when that hope and terror passed away, there followed the establishment of the feudal system in all its rigidity.

It is after this date that we begin to hear stories of a sort of revival of heathenism in remote and country districts, such as that story of the revival of Nerthus-worship, by the rustics near Comelimünster, which is described so graphically by the Abbot of St. Tron. We may call such instances the last struggle of Heathendom, not able any longer to hide itself from the scrutiny of orthodoxy; as it still might do, we saw, in the days of Charlemagne, when, though it was death to remain unbaptized, it was only a matter of a fine to be caught offering some ancient rustic sacrifice. Now, too, we begin to hear most of Satan and the Witches' Sabbath, and all those dark stories of compacts with the fiend; of the Wild Hunt (Arthur's Chase); the Phantom Army, and the thousand similar legends which constituted the very marrow of mediæval superstition.

It was of the essence of feudalism to foster beliefs like these, much more so, in truth, than it was of the essence of the life of the Vikings to do so. This last was the very ideal of a wandering life; the other the most fixed imaginable. The serf was bound to the soil; the lord was not less securely rooted upon his own land. 'No land without a lord, no lord without land,' was the watch-word of this system. Strange that the descendants of the Vikings should have been its chief promoters. But opposed

as it seemed to their spirit, it was in harmony with the ancient social life, and, as we have said, the ancient beliefs of the German people as a whole. It has been said, rather paradoxically, that the feudal system was nothing more than a development from the village life of the ancient Germans in days before they began to think of migration, and lived contented in their villages and *Gaus*. At least feudalism had a closer relation to this social life than to the city life of the Latin peoples.

But neither the Vikings as a whole nor the Scandinavian nations were ever fully drawn into this system which brooded over Central Europe. Therefore the creed of the Vikings as a whole—that creed I mean which is preserved in the Edda—cannot be reckoned a constituent element of the beliefs of the Middle Ages, in the same sense that the creed of the ancient Germans became so. It is for this reason that I have sought to make a distinction between the two, to extract from the Scandinavian mythology those parts which appeared antique, leaving the whole *corpus* of Eddaic mythology to be spoken of in its proper place in the history of the Vikings—if we should even reach that point.

For before we reached that point we should have to go back somewhat in time and watch the dawnings of history in the Scandinavian countries themselves, and note other signs of national activity, such as colonization; the re-discovery, and the colonization of Iceland for example; matters which do not belong to an account of the Viking raids in Christendom.

VII.

We have dwelt rather on the *superstition* of these times than on the whole body of Christian belief. The simpler features in the latter may be taken more or less for granted; it is to the former that we owe most of what is distinctive in mediæval Catholicism. I would not, however, be thought to imply that the people learnt no more from Christianity than the belief in its magic powers through sacraments, relics, the mystic rites of the Church; or than the dread of the antithesis of Catholic magic, the survival of heathenism in witchcraft. The former,

the orthodox magic, if I may be allowed to use the word, was, indeed, according to the belief of those days, the primary condition of all spiritual influence. The being uncreated by baptism, unrenewed by the sacraments, was spiritually non-existent. But the creed, the moral code, which grew up in this atmosphere was simple, pious, sincere. We have from the age with which we are dealing the best proof of this in those two vernacular poems—poems preserved in the *popular* speech the *deutsch*—whereof mention has been already made; more especially in the longer one of the two, *Heliand*. The language of popes and councils may be a mere specious hypocrisy, or a meaningless reverberation from the language of the apostles and the fathers of the Church. But this could never be the case in a popular poem founded upon the Christian creed.

Heliand is a poem in old Saxon, almost the counterpart of the poems written in this country in Anglo-Saxon, and commonly called the poems of Cædmon; but that this is a metrical paraphrase of the Evangelists. Here in Saxony, therefore, the last conquered of the Christian territories, bards had been found, as in England, to turn their art away from its old uses, and instead of chanting the glories of national heroes—

> Wel-hwylc gecwæð
> Þæt he fram Sigemundes secgan hýrde
> Ellendædum, uncúþes fela,
> Wælsinges gewin. . .
>
> (Everything he told
> That he of Sigmund had heard sing,
> Of glorious deeds, uncouth things,[1]
> The Völsungs' victories.)

to celebrate the glories of the Saviour and their new creed.

There is a story how one of the English bishops received a Divine command to devote in this manner his art to the furtherance of Christianity: how he sat by the high roads chanting the story of the gospel till men turned and listened. The like story how Cædmon's lips were opened and he received the same Divine gift of song is well known. No more potent

[1] Unknown things.

form of preaching could be found than this. Of formal preaching the Deutsch folk got little, probably. There are, indeed, at some of the councils held in this century—notably at a great council held at Mainz under the presidency of Raban—provisions made for the reading of sermons and homilies to the people in their native tongue. Of course most of the lower order of priests understood and spoke each the dialect of *deutsch* which belonged to the district from which he came. But such priests were not the men to do much in the way of original sermon writing; and all the homilies at present in use were in Latin. It was considered a thing worthy of note that such men as Wala and Raban could speak this popular tongue. The real preachers of Christianity among the people were, first the bells and chants and mystic rites which embodied the spirit of the creed; and next the bards, such as the author of the *Heliand*, who set its creed to popular verse. Nor can we without wonder think of the forest shades which a generation or two ago had echoed the wild shouts of Widukind's soldiers, the cries of Nerthus' priests, perhaps the screams of human victims sacrificed to Odin, listening to such words as these from the Heliand poet—[1]

Then setteth he the lost
Upon his left-hand side.
He setteth on the right
And speaketh to them,

'And take the rich kingdom
For them his good children,
This hath set apart,
Ye must your happiness enjoy
For oft have ye done my will
And were good to me with your gifts,
With thirst or hunger,
When I lay in fetters,
Oft came there to me,
Then the righteous answer
'My Father the Good, answer me
Or thus oppressed,
Almighty! and declarest
When saw thee a single man

the accursed of mankind
But the blessed
and greeteth the good,
'Come ye,' he says, 'who here are chosen
the fair one prepared for you,
kept to the world's end,
the Father of all my children
and govern this wide kingdom
and well entreated me,
when I was oppressed,
or seized with cold
cramped in prison,
help of your hands.'

when were you thus in prison,
as before folk thou tellest

in such plight?

[1] M. Heyne, *Bibl. der ält. deut. Lit.* Hêliand (1883).

For thou hast the might of all men.'
Then in reply the Only Good, 'All that ye did,' he says,
To those of your faith ye did it to God's honour.'

And so on to the end of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.

There is no need to enlarge upon this poem, because, as we can see by the above passage, it is neither more nor less than a metrical paraphrase of the Evangelists. But the childlike simplicity of the language seems to give it new force, and certainly it enables us better to realize the kind of Christianity preached among the Saxon farms and villages. In one or two points, moreover, the author has departed from his original. Christ is not a peasant's son, but a young prince (Droste)—a prince in *Saxony*, as it almost seems; though Jerusalem and the other Bible names are imported from the Gospels.

To what degree this story of the life of Christ may have taken its place in popular belief, one cannot say. At any rate, it scarcely belongs to that picture of the actual world of the Germans which we want to realize. With another large part of the Christian doctrine it was different; and it was different again with that picture of the destruction of the world which Heliand faithfully reproduces from the original, but in its own simple and direct language. *That*, as a future event, and not a past one, formed a potent factor in the world-theory of all men at this time; and we have already seen how much men in this age had begun to concern themselves with the picture of the future, of the end of the world, and of heaven and hell.

Then shall men see the Moon, and the Sun likewise,
Both lose their light, and be swallowed up in darkness.
The Stars fall— the white lights of heaven;
The Earth quakes; the broad world heaves.
Such signs shall be.
The great Sea roars; the storms are let loose;
The waves cast fear on the dwellers upon earth.
Then the multitude minish through great oppression;
The folk through fear; for Peace is there nowhere;
But manifold contest o'er all the world
Is raised up.

Each race another strives to master;
To the kings' battle mighty musterings shall be;
Many deaths in pain and open war.
It is a fearful thing that such slaughter shall
Arise among men.
Great pestilence shall spread over the world;
Such death among mankind as never before in Mittelgard.
Men lie in sickness, perishing in the plague;
They fall and die and end their days—

And so forth.

The other Christian poem written about this time is in the *hoch deutsch* vernacular. It was written in Bavaria and dedicated to Lewis the German. This is the poem which commonly goes by the name of *Muspilli*.[1] It is more original than the *Heliand*. It is a prophetic piece, describing the end of the world; and the description is such that we can easily detect an admixture of heathen beliefs with the Christian.

I have said the poem is devoted to a description of the end of the world; I should rather have said the fragment of it which has come down to us is so. This Bavarian poem is not represented by a long MS., comparable to the Saxon *Heliand*; only by quite a small fragment. This fragment is, however, so far as it goes, a genuine contribution to our knowledge of the beliefs of those days. It is not a *mere* reproduction from the Bible.

The poem ends with a picture of the great *Armageddon*, the battle between the celestial and infernal powers, which is to be immediately followed by the burning of the world. Here the battle consists of personal combats between selected champions from heaven and hell. The word used for the fire that consumes the world is that from which the poem has received its name, *Muspilli*, and it is the most significant word in the poem; or we find it occurring also in the Eddas.[2] Here, then, we have a still closer meeting-point between Christianity

[1] *Muspilli*, Ed. Schmeller, 1882.

[2] Bugge, however, contends that the Eddaic word *Muspell* has been merely copied from the German word *muspilli*, which he (and Vigfusson follows him) derives from *Munt-spilli*, 'world destruction' (Lat. *mundus*, Ger. *spilli*).

and heathendom. For we shall find in the Northern Eddas, which are the last voice of heathen mythology, other descriptions of the ending of the world and the personal combats which preceded it, in many points exactly similar to the description in *Muspilli*, which is the first voice (almost) of Christian mythology in Germany. Whether we come to the conclusion that the Eddaic picture is derived from the Christian, or whether the picture in *Muspilli* is an echo of Old German heathenism, the likeness between the northern poem and the Bavarian remains. Here, then, is the Bavarian account, with which we will conclude our fragmentary picture of the popular creed of Christian Europe at the end of the ninth century :—

There comes an army
Another from the pitch of hell.
Care shall possess it,
To which of the armies
For should the following
Quick will they carry it
To the smoke and the darkness.
But if those obtain it,
The angels' prize it is ;
Where is life without death,
A home without care ;
When one a habitation
A house in heaven,
Therefore needeth every one
That he the will of God
And Hell's fire
from the stars of heaven ;
Around that soul they strive.
till the wager be settled,
that soul shall belong.
of Satan obtain it,
there where all sorrow springs ;
That is a direful lot.
who from Heaven come,
they bear it to the heavenly kingdom ;
light without darkness,
there is none sick.
in Paradise winneth,
there hath he abundant comfort.
that his thoughts thither turn,
willingly worketh,
fleeth with fear.

And more in this strain. So far we have pure Christianity, and little of the mythical element. But now we pass on to the final battle of the world—a battle known only to the eye of prophecy, and of which the battle over each individual soul is a kind of symbol.

This have I heard
Elias shall fight
The warlock is harnessed ;
Mighty the combatants ;
Elias strives
Of the righteous will he
Therefore to his help
the wise ones declare,
with Antichrist.
a battle there shall be.
mighty too the prize.
for everlasting life ;
the kingdom establish.
the heavenly powers come.

Antichrist upholdeth
The old fiend Satan,
Wherefore on the battlefield
And there for ever
Of godly men many think
And when Elias's blood
The hills catch fire;
None remains on earth;
The sea steams;
The moon falls from heaven;
No rock stands firm;

It comes with fire
No man his brother
When the broad face of earth
And in fire and rain
Where are the boundaries
The boundary is burnt,
She knows not how to absolve herself,

the Old Enemy,
who shall his destruction be.
wounded will he fall,
will he conquered lie.
that Elias shall be wounded.
on the earth drips down,
of all the trees
the waters are dried up;
Heaven consumes in flames;
Mittelgard burns;
the day of vengeance dawns on earth;
to seek the sons of men.
can on MUSPELDAY help;
is all consumed,
are all things dissolved.
which brought strife among men?
but the burden of the soul remains.
and goeth down to punishment.

And on this picture of the world's ending, drawn by a Christian pencil, we will make, too, an ending of this volume.

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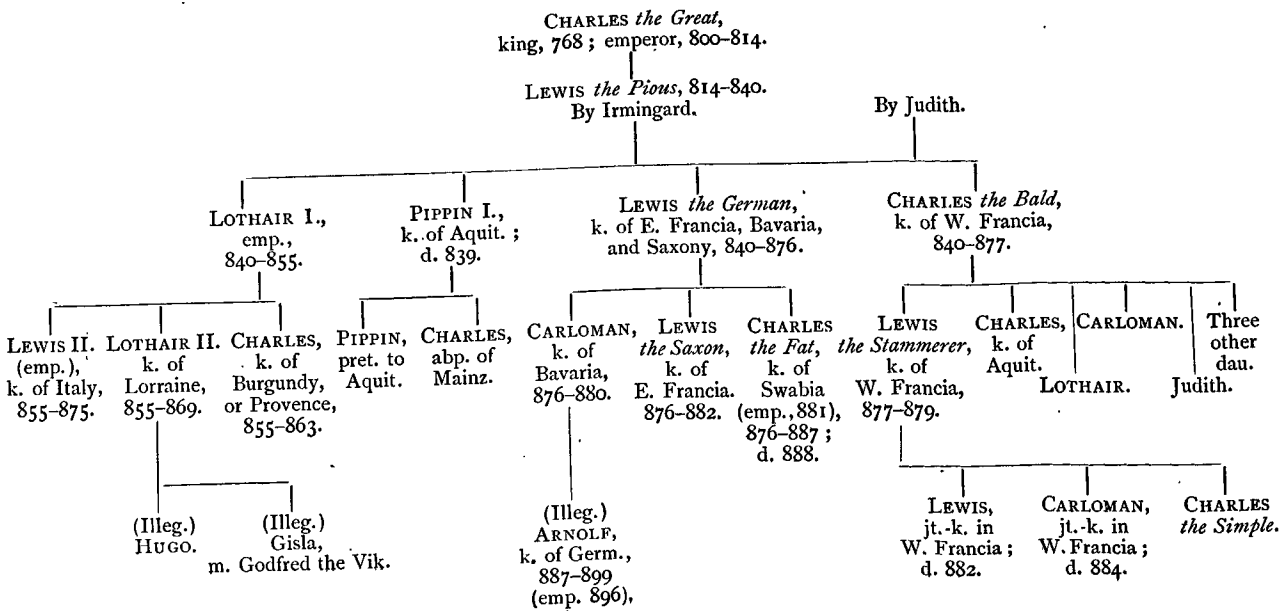
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

*** The entries in *italics* are those of events not directly connected with the history of the Vikings.

The names within square brackets are those of the countries in which take place the events recorded in the preceding entries, or to whose history they belong.

Anno Domini.

789. Attack on the Dorset coast [England].
793. ,, ,, Lindisfarne [England].
794. ,, ,, Monkwearmouth; shipwreck and slaughter of the Vikings [Engl.].
795. Attack on Glamorganshire; defeat of Vik. [S. Wales]. Att. on Rechru (Lambey) [Ireland].
798. Attack on Peel, Isle of Man [Engl.].
799. ,, ,, Frisian coast, and on Aquitaine; 105 Vik. slain [Frank. Emp.].
800. *Charles the Great cr. Emperor.* Att. on Frisian coast and isl. [Frk. Emp.].
802. *Acc. of Egbert k. of Wessex..* First att. on Iona [Scotland].
806. Second att. on Iona [Scotl.].
807. Att. on Inishmurray and Sligo; raid into Roscommon [Ireland].
808. Godfred k. of Denmark attacks Abodriti [Slavs].
810. Godfred desp. fleet (200 sail) to att. Frisia; collects army to invade Saxony; slain [Fr. Emp.].
811. Charlemagne insp. the defences of W. Francia [Fr. Emp.]. Vik. def. in Ulster [Ireland].
812. Vik. attacks on Owless, Connemara, and W. coast of Ireland to Cork. Vik. def. by Eoganachts of Loch Lein; 416 sl. [Ireland].
813. Men of Owless def. by Vik. [Ireland].
814. *D. of Charles the Great. Acc. of Lewis the Pious.*
818–20? Norse Vik. begin to att. islands of N. Atlantic.
820. Atts. on Flanders coast, Seine, and Aquitaine (13 sail) [Fr. Emp.]. Att. begin again in Ireland (Isl. in Wexford harb.). [Irel.].
822. Atts. on Cork harbour, Beggary Isl., and Howth [Ireland].

A.D.

824. Atts. on Skellig Michil and Bangor (Bennchair) [Ireland].

825. Atts. in Wexford ha., on Barrow, Nore, Waterford, Blackwater, Kinsale Bay, Limerick [Irel.]. Third att. on Iona, Blaithmac sl. [Scotl.].

826. *Bapt. of Harald the Dane at Mainz* [*Fr. Emp.*]. Att. on Dublin Co. (Lusca), on Ulster, and in S.W. [Irel.].

827. Plund. in Leinster and Ulster [Irel.]. Att. on Dalraida [Scotl.].

828–9. Plund. on N. and E. coast [Ireland].

830. *Anscar's mission to Sweden. Outbreak of reb. in Fr. Emp.* [Fr. Emp.]. Pl. in Louth [Ireland].

832. 'Great royal fleet' (Turgesius') arrives in Ireland; Vik. victory in Lough Neagh. [Irel.].

833. *The 'Field of Lies.'* [Fr. Emp.] Ecgberht holds Witan to consider defences ag. Vik. [Engl.]. Vik. def. at Derry [Irel.].

834. *First Chr. ch. built in Sweden.* First grt. Vik. exp. against Frisia; Utrecht and Dorstad pl. Alarm at mouth of Loire [Fr. Emp.]. Ravaging all round Irish coasts [Irel.].

835. Dorstad pl.; def. of Vik. Ct. Rainald fights with Vik. at Noirmoutiers [Fr. Emp.]. Vik. att. Sheppey [Engl.]. Mon. of Louth rav.; Clonmicnois bnt.; Ferns and Clonmore pl. (Xmas night) [Irel.].

836. Dorstad, Antwerp, Witla, &c., pl. Horik's ambass. sl. in Cologne [Fr. Emp.]. Vik. (35 sail) def. Eng. at Charmouth [Engl.]. Two Vik. fl. of 60 sail up Boyne and Liffey [Irel.].

837. Dorstad, Walcheren, &c., pl.; Lewis march. into Frisia; holds council at Nymuegen [Fr. Emp.]. Vik. pl. in Connaught and Limerick; fight with men of Bray, Saxulf sl. [Irel.].

838. Vik. ships wrecked on Fris. coast [Fr. Emp.]. Bat. of Hengstone, def. of Vik. and Cornishmen [Engl.]. First taking of Dublin [Irel.].

838 or 9. *Death of Ecgberht; acc. of Æthelwulf* [Engl.].

839. Danes and Slavs in conj. invade Saxony [Fr. Emp.].

840. *Death of Emp. Lewis* [*Fr. Emp.*]. Ealdorman Wulfheard def. Vik. (33 sail) at Southampton; Eald. Æthelhelm def. and sl. by V. at Portland [Engl.]. Vik. pl. in Lough Neagh [Irel.].

841. *Bat. of Fontenoy.* Oscar's Vik. fl. pl. Rouen and threat. Jumièges [West Francia]. Vik. in marsh country; Eald. Hereberht sl.; in Lindsay and East Anglia, and in Kent [Engl.]. Vik. pl. in Lough Neagh [Irel.].

842. Vik. att. Quentovic, Hanwig? and Northanwig? [W. Francia] *Arles pl. by Corsairs* [Lothair's k.]. London and Rochester pl. [Engl.].

843. *Treaty of Verdun.* [*Fr. Emp.*]. Oscar, in all. with Nominoï, D. of Brittany and Ct. Lambert, pl. Nantes. Vik. winter in France 1st time [W. Franc.]. Turgesius takes Leth Cuinn. Ota in minster of Clonmicnois [Irel.].

844. Quentovic pl. (2nd time); Oscar's fl., in all. with Wm. of Septimania and Pippin of Aquitaine, att. Toulouse [W. Fr.]; sails to Asturias and down W. coast of Moham. Spain [Spain]. Limerick pl., Clonmicnois brnt. [Irel.].

845. Horik desp. fleet ag. Hamburg (600 sail) [Germ.]; another under Ragnar (Lodbrok?) ag. Paris (120 sail); miracle. Vik. ret. from Sp., def. Christ. and pl. Saintes [W. Franc.]. Great def. of Vik. at Ith (Earl Onfil sl.). Turgesius drowned in Lough Owel [Irel.].

846. *Rome att. by Corsairs and Borgo pl.* [Italy]. Dorstad pl. [Lotharingia].

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Noirmoutier burnt [W. Fr.]. Vik. def. on Parret by Eald. Eanwulf and Osric and Bp. Ealhstan. [Engl.]. Naval vict. over Vik. [Irel.].

847. *Anscar reinst. in Hamburg; friendly policy of Horik, K. of Denm.* [Germ.] Vik. sail 9 miles above Dorstad [Loth.]. Herbauge bnt. by Loire Vik.; Nominoï unsuc. att. Loire Vik.; Bordeaux bes. by Oscar [W. Fr.]. Dubl. Vik. (1,200) under Hakon sl. [Irel.].

848. *Aquitainians subd.* Vik. ships on Garonne capt. by Charles; Bordeaux falls to Vik. [W. Fr.].

849. *Luna pl. by Corsairs* [Ital.]. *Lewis Germ. def. by Bohem.* [*Germ.*]. 'The Northmen continued to gain in strength' (An. Xan.) [Lothar.]. 700 Vik. sl. in Meath; 1,200 Vik. under Jarl Torer sl. [Irel.].

850. Rorik, Harald's neph., and Godfred, Harald's son, pl. in Frisia; rest. by Lothair to fief Walcheren; *Arles and other towns pl. by Saracens* [Lothar.]. Oscar and Godfred, Harald's son, pl. in Flanders (Therouanne, Ghent); in Seine. Seine Vik. entrench. in 'Givoldi fossa' 250 days [W. Francia]; Rorik's fleet (350 s.) pl. Cant. and London; Berhtulf def. and sl. Æthelwulf def. Rorik's Vik. at Ockley. Battles of Wembury and Sandwich (naval)—Eng. vict. Vik. winter in Thanet—1st wintering in England [Engl.].

851. *Sec. meeting at Meersen* [Fr. Emp.]. Vik. sail up Elbe and make a severe att. on Saxony [Germ.]. *Death of Nominoï; victory of Bretons over Ch. the Bald.* Vik. burn Beauvais; defd. on Epte [W. Fr.]. Danish fl. in Irish waters. Bat. of Carlingford Bay bet. Danes and Norsemen. Danish vict. [Irel.].

852. Fl. (250 s.) att. Frisia, obt. ransom [Lothar.]; Lothair and Charles the Bald prop. to att. Seine Vik. Charles makes terms with Godfred. Vik. pl. Fontanelle. Godfred and Sihtric in Givoldi fossa, in 250 ships rav. Seine country (3rd exp. up Seine); Oscar def. Cts. Rainald and Reno at Briliacum (Aquit.) and then ret. to Bordeaux [W. Fr.].

853. Vik. under Sihtric in Loire; make winter camp. St. Florent att.; Nantes att. and brnt; Tours and Marmoutier bnt. [W. Fr.] Eald. Huda and Ealhere with fyrd of Kent and Surrey att. Vik. in Thanet without effect [Engl.]. Olaf the White overk. in Ireland [Irel.].

854. Civil war in Denmark; Horik II. king [Germ.]. E. Frisia att. [Lothar.]. Loire Vik. att. Angers and Blois; def. before Orleans. Vik. atts. less num. this year [W. Fr.].

855. *Death of Emp. Lothair.* Frisia becomes a perm. home of Vik. under Rorik and Godfred [Lothar.]. Sihtric with 105 sail settled on isl. of Loire. Sihtric and Björn up Seine to Pitres. Vik. def. in Perche. Siht. leaves Seine; Björn entrenches himself. [W. Fr.]. Vik. under Halfdan, Ivar, and Ubbe remove camp fr. Thanet to Sheppey [Engl.].

856. *Partition of Orbe* [*Lothar.*]. Sihtric pl. Orleans. New fleet in Seine; 2nd att. on Paris [W. Fr.]. *Mar. of Æthelwulf and Judith. Reb. of Æthelbald* [Eng.]. Gall-Gaedhil first mentioned [Irel.].

857. *Murder of Erispoï, D. of Brittany.* Loire Vik. pl. Blois and Tours (2nd att.). Pippin of Aquit. joins Vik. [W. Fr.). Olaf and Ivar slaugh. Gaedhil and Gall-Gaedhil [Irel.].

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857–8. Vik. plun. in Frisia (Batavian isl.). The churches of Utrecht destr. [Lothar.].

858. *Nicholas I. Pope* [*Ital.*]. Vik. (Rorik's?) make att. on Saxony; driven back; Bremen pl. [Germ.]. Baltfred, Bp. of Bayeaux sl. by Vik. Björn does hom. to Ch. the Bald. Charles the B. and Lothair II. bes. Vik. in Ossel. *Lewis the G. invades W. Francia.* Loire Vik. capt. Chartres [W. Fr.]. *Death of Æthelwulf* [*Engl.*].

859. *Charl. rest. in W. Fr. Robert the Str. att. Lewis, s. of Ch. the Bald.* Vik. in Scheld (S. Valerie Abb. pl.); and in Somme (Amiens pl.). Immo, Bp. of Noyon, and Erminfred, Bp. of Beauvais sl. by Vik. Peasants of Loire country att. Vik.; their own lords take pt. against them [W. Fr.]. Hasting and Björn (70 sl.) make exp. to Asturias, Moh. Spain, Africa, and Camargue [Sp.].

860. Hast. and Björn attack Luna [Ital.] Vik. in Rhine [Loth.]. Vik. in Somme (under Weland) and Seine. Charles attempts to bribe Weland to att. V. of Seine [W. Francia]. Weland (200 sl.) sails to Eng. and pl. Winchester. Men of Hamp. and Berksh. def. Vik. [Engl.]. Vik. under Hona and Tomrir att. Limerick [Irel.].

861. Therouanne pl. St. Omer pl. Seine (Oissel) Vik. make 3rd and 4th att. on Paris. Weland ret. (200 sail), and bes. Vik. in Oissel; allows them to withdraw on payment of fine. Oissel Vik. enlist under Weland's son and settle in St. Maur. Weland pl. Melun. Hast. and Björn ret. to France (?) [W. Fr.]. Olaf and Aedh. pl. in Meath; def. by Malachy [Irel.].

862. Vik. att. Saxony [Germ.]. Rorik ret. to Frisia [Lothar.]. Vik. from St. Maur pl. Meaux. Weland sails away, ret., and is bapt. Seine Vik. all. with Bretons; bribed by Ct. Robert to give up alliance [W. Fr.]. Olaf and Aedh. pl. in Meath [Irel.].

863. Vik. def. by Saxons [Germ.]. Vik. sail up Rhine to Dorstad and thence to Xanten (miracle) [Lothar.]. *Baldwin of Fl. mar. Judith. Salomon does hom. to Ch.* Vik. unsucc. att. by Ct. Turpio, of Angoumois. Poictiers threat. by Vik. [W. Fr.]. *Death of Malachy* I. *Aedh. succ.* [Irel.].

864. Vik. att. Saxony [Germ.]. Rudolf, Harald's son, bribed to def. Frisia [Lothar.]. Vik. att. Flanders; driven off by Baldwin [W. Fr.]; ret. to Frisia [Lothar.]. *Council of Pitres.* Fortif. of Pitres and Paris. Wide pl. of Loire Vik. (Poictiers, Angoulême, Perigueux, Limoges, Clermont, Bourges, laid waste about this time). Robert the Strong fought two battles with Loire Vik., 1st Vik. def., 2nd R. wounded. *Domestic affairs begin to improve in W. F. Aquitanians submit to Charles the B.* [W. Fr.].

865. *Anscar ag. abp. of Hamburg unit. with Bremen; dies* [Germ.]. Vik. (50 s.) again on Seine; att. Chartres, but are def. and sl.; Vik. under Baret pl. Orleans (2nd time), and then att. Fleury Abbey. Loire Vik. att. and burn Le Mans and Poictiers; def. by Cts. Gozfrid and Heriveus. Seigfred's Vik. def. on Charente (Not again so far to the south). [W. Fr.]. Vik. come to Thanet and winter there [Engl.].

866. Vik. settle by Yssel [Loth.]. Seine Vik. come to Melun; def. by Ct. Robert and Odo; aft. rec. bribe from Ch. Fortif. of Pitres pressed

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forw. 4,000 lb. silver pd. to Loire Vik. Robert the S. and Ramnulf sl. by Hasting [W. Fr.]. Vik. from Thanet rav. in Kent. Gt, Army sails for marsh country [Engl.]. Vik. def. in Cork. harb. Aedh. pl. the strongholds of the Norsemen [Irel.]. Olaf pl. Pictland (N.W. Scot.) [Scotl.].

867. *Nicholas I. d.; Hadrian II. Pope* [Ital.]. Rorik driven out of Frisia [Lothar.]. Bourges pl. [W. Fr.]. Army marches N. and takes York [Engl.]. Quarrel bet. three Vik. leaders (Olaf, Ivan, and Oisla) [Ireland]. Vik. pl. in Scotland [Scotland].

868. Franks and Bretons unite ag. Loire Vik. under Hasting. *Salomon ackn. King of Brittany.* Vik. rec. daneg. fr. Orleans [W. Fr.]. Gt. Army attacked in York; def. of Eng., Osberht and Ælla sl. Vik. make Ecgberht K. of Na.; plunder in Bernicia. Army marches fr. York to Nottingham; bes. by Burgred, k. of Mercia, with aid of Æthelred, k. of Wessex, and Ælfred. Danes ret. to York [Engl.].

869. *Death of Lothair II.* [Loth.]. Bretons under Salomon make peace with Loire Vik. Men of Poitou def. Loire Vik. [W. Fran.]. Gt. Army rem. at York [Engl.].

870. *Treaty of Meersen* [*Germ. and W. Fr.*]. Rorik has conf. with Charles B. [W. F.]. Army div. into two; (1) wint. Thetford; (2) Sails to Lindsay. Bardeney, Crowland, Peterborough, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Ely, pl.; (1) div. att. Eadmund; martyrd. of Eadmund k. of East Anglia [Eng.]. 'Ireland has peace from the Foreigners for 40 yrs.' (*Gaill*) [Irel.]. Olaf and Ivar bes. Dumbarton [Scotl.].

871. *Bari falls to Emp. Lewis II.* [*Ital.*]. Hugo and Gauzfrid att. Loire Vik. [W. Fr.]. Army crosses Thames and makes camp at Reading; Eng. vict. at Englefield; Eng. defeat and flight to Wistley Green. Bat. of Ashdown, grt. Vik. defeat; fall of k. Bægsæg and 5 earls. Eng. def. at Basing and Merton. *Death of Æthelred. Ælfred succ.* Bat. of Wilton and def. of Eng. Danegeld pd. to Vik. Army wint. in London. Mercian k. Burgred p. Danegeld [Engl.].

872. *Death of Hadrian; John VIII. Pope. Gt. vict. of Lewis the Emp. over Saracens* [*Ital.*]. Charles the B. has second confer. with Rorik and Rudolf, Vik. leaders. Rorik does hom. [W. Fr.] Army in London [Engl.].

873. Last ment. of any Dan. kings for 50 yrs. in Fr. chron. [Denm.]. Rorik att. Frisia and def. (Rudolf, Haralds's son, and 800 m. sl.) [Loth.]. Ch. prep. exped. against Loire Vik., and in comp. with Bretons bes. them in Angers [W. Fr.]. Army goes to Torksey (Lincolnsh.) Death of Ivar. [Engl.].

874. *Zwentibold ackn. Duke of Moravia* [*Germ.*]. *Salomon murd.* [*W. Fr.*]. Army goes fr. Torksey to Repton, and takes winter quarters there.

875. *Death of Emp. Lewis. Charles the Bald cr. Emperor* (*Dec.*). [Italy]. Part of Army under Halfdan settl. in Northa. Another part under Guthorm, &c., wint. at Cambridge [Engl.]. Oistin (Thorstein) pl. in Scotl. and killed there [Scotl.].

876. *Death of Lewis Germ. Battle of Andernach; Ch. the B. def. by Lewis the Yr.* [*Germ.*]. Vik. def. by W. Frisians [Loth.]. Vik. ag. in Seine (100 s.) [W. Fr.]. Guthorm's army unexp. sls. round to

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Wareham. Bes. by Ælfred; steals to Exeter. Vik. fl. def. at Swanage [Engl.].

877. Danegeld (5,000 lb. silver) pd. to Seine Vik.; another daneg. pd. to Loire Vik. *Council of Quiersy.* Ordinances concern. fortif. of Pitres, Paris, &c. *Death of Charles the Bald. Lewis the Stammerer suc.* [W. Fr.]. Guthorm's army marches from Exeter to Chippenham. Def. of Vik. at 'Cynwith.' Breakdown of Eng. resist. Ælfred on Æthelney [Engl.]. Bat. in Strangford Lough bet. Northumbr. Danes and Irish Vik. [Irel.].

878. St. Omer bnt. by Vik. Hugo and Lewis the St. fgt. ag. Loire Vik. [W. Fr.]. Ælfred coll. army of men of Hamps., Wilts., and Somers. and enc. Guth. army at Æthandune (Eddington?). Vik. def. and bes. in Chippenham; Peace of Wedmore; East Anglia given to Guthorm-Æthelstan. Prt. of Vik. army settl. at Cirencester. Fresh Vik. army comes to Fulham.

879. *Charles the Fat, Emp.* [*Italy*]. *Death of Lewis Stam. Lewis and Carloman succ.* Army fr. Eng. (Fulham) ret. to Flanders; St. Omer, Therouanne and Ghent, pl.; Vik. unsucc. att. by Hugo of Lothar.; army winters in Fl. L. and C. gain victory over Loire Danes on the Vienne [W. Fr.]. *Boso cr. King of Burgundy* [*Burgundy*].

880. *Lewis Sax. makes 2nd inv. of W. Francia. Peace of Ribemont bet. kings of E. and W. Francia* [*Germ. and W. Fr.*]. *Death of Carlman of Bav.* Lewis the Sax. att. Fland. Vik. under Godfred at Thuin on the Sambre, and def. them; but fails to follow up victory. Vik. def. and annih. Saxon army under Bruno on Lüneburg Heath. Vik. sail up Rhine to Xanten and winter at Nymuegen [Germ.[1]]. Abbt. Gozlin att. Vik. from Ghent but is def. Vik. harry whole distr. bet. Scheld and Somme [W. Fr.]. *Unsucc. siege of Vienne* [*Burgundy*].

881. Vik. in Frisia under Godfred and Siegfred form camp at Ashloh (Elsloo). Thence they pl. Aix, Cologne, and other towns on Rhine; pass New Yr.'s Day at Prüm [Germ.]. Vik. leave their camp at Courtray and ravage country bet. Scheld and Somme; cross into France proper; decis. def. by Lewis at Saucourt [W. Fr.].

882. *Death of Lewis the Saxon.* Ashloh Vik. rav. county of Mosel. Charles the Fat assembl. troops at Worms. At news of appr. of Charles, Vik. retire to Ashloh; besieged by Charles; receive heavy bribe from Emp. Godf. is bapt. and mar. Hugo's sister, Gisla. [Germ.]. Lewis k. of W. Fr. att. Hasting and Vik. of the Loire, who leave this stream not to ret. till circ. 903. *Death of Lewis k. of W. Fr.* Siegfred's Vik. leave Meuse and come up Scheld to Condé. Vik. leave Condé and (Abbot Hugo having gone to meet Charles the Fat at Worms) they march through wd. of Thierache to Laon; thence to Rheims; flight of Hincmar. Met by Carloman and def. at Avaux sur Aisne; they return to Condé. *Death of Hincmar* [W. Fr.].

882–3. (Winter) Vik. on Condé ravage far and near, to Scarpe and Somme [W. Fr.].

[1] By the Treaty of Ribemont the kingdom of Lewis the Saxon was extended as far as the Scheld.

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883. Hugo of Lothar. intrigues with Godfred. Fresh Vik. fleet comes to Frisia, settl. in Duisberg. Duke Henry gains some vict. over Vik. [Germ.]. Carloman unable to keep the field before Vik. who make winter camp at Amiens.

884. Vik. army def. at Norden by Frisians and Saxons under Rimbert (10,000 sl.?) [Germ.]. Vik. in Amiens accept bribe of 12,000 lb. to leave W. Francia; some go to Engl., some to Louvain. *Death of Carloman* [W. Fr.]. Vik. from W. Fr. bes. Rochester, assist. by Guthorm of East Anglia; Rochester rel. by Ælfred, who also sends fleet to att. Danes in East Anglia (Stour) and takes 16 ships.

885. Godfred makes furth. demands for territory; invit. to a conference by Rhine and there mur. by Ct. Everard. Hugo taken, blinded and impr. in Prüm [Germ.]. Vik. return from Louvain to France hearing of death of Carloman. Siegfred and Danes sail for Seine; att. Rouen (1st att. for 44 yrs.); begin siege of Paris [W. Fr.].

886. Siege of Paris continued. Siegfred withdr. from siege. Death of D. Henry. Charles the Fat adv. on Paris; siege part. raised; Vik. bribed to retire. Vik. in Upper Burgundy [W. Fr.].

887. Vik. ret. from Burgy.; checked by Bp. Anscheric and Abb. Ebolus; sail up Marne; take Meaux and Troyes [W. Fr.]. *Death of Boso k. of Lower Burgundy* [*Burg.*]. *Deposition of Charles the Fat. Arnulf elect. k. of Germany* [*Germ*].

888. *Odo elect. k. of W. Francia. Rudolf elect. k. of Upper Burgundy. Berengarius elect. k. of Italy.* Vik. pl. round Verdun, Toul, and Rheims. Vik. def. by Odo at Montfaucon. Vik. again before Paris; pl. Champagne.

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